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MIDLAND SAINTS : THE MORMON MISSION IN THE
WEST MIDLANDS, 1837 - 77.

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ABSTRACT

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Ten years before the pioneer party of the Mormon Church first sighted the Valley of the Great Salt Lake, and determined that this was the place where "the Saints would find protection and safety," missionaries of the sect were active in England, preaching in the streets, halls and private accommodation to those persons, largely of the working-classes, who were prepared to give them a hearing. As the pioneer Saints planted the first seeds in the soil of Utah, the Church already claimed 14,000 adherents in Britain. Four years later, at the height of its membership for the nineteenth century, the British Mission numbered just short of 33,000.

The narrative of the Mormon Church establishing its settlement in the desert has been penned on numerous occasions and romanticized on film; this thesis also chronicles heroism, although its protagonists, the British converts who responded to the teachings of the Mormon missionaries during the early years of Queen Victoria's reign, who faced opposition and persecution for their belief, heeded the doctrine of the gathering and emigrated, to traverse ocean, plain, desert and mountain, ultimately to dwell in Zion with their fellow Saints with whom they shared religion, culture and myth, with whom they were one people, remain largely unrecorded.

To achieve an intimacy with the British Saints, this thesis adopts a regional perspective, concentrating upon the Mission of the Church to the West Midlands, from its inception in 1837 to the death of the Church's second Prophet, Brigham Young, himself at one time a missionary to the area. The West Midlands, the most fertile of the English regions in the provision of Church members, was the British Mission in microcosm; to experience the endeavour of the Saints of this region is to appreciate the achievements of the Church nationally and the interdependent advances of the Mormon Church on both sides of the Atlantic.

John Cotterill
September 1985.

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the valley of which was to provide haven and home to the thousands who shared their religious beliefs. Many of these, from their camp at Winter Quarters, later Omaha, Nebraska, at that very time anticipated their own journey westwards, in the path of the pioneer group. Three days to the rear of the nine came the body of the advance party, 139 Latter-Day Saints, including their Prophet, Brigham Young. On the 24th July 1847, suffering from mountain fever, he raised himself from his sick-bed in the wagon of his long-standing comrade, Wilford Woodruff, surveyed the valley which he had just entered, and according to report, declared "this is the place whereon we will plant our feet and where the Lord's people will dwell." 2. The Saints had found their permanent settlement in the deserts of America, where they would build Zion and develop their distinctive community. Every year since, on 24th July, the Church has celebrated Pioneer Day in remembrance of the arrival of Brigham Young and his fellow pioneers in the valley of the Great Salt Lake.

When Young and his party entered the valley, the initial acts of cultivation and irrigation had already commenced. The nine had selected the location for the first encampment and had begun the planting of crops in anticipation of the migration of their fellow Saints. The organization and cohesion that marked the movement and settlement of Mormons was evidenced in the labours of the nine, whose work was not merely for their own subsistence

2. Quoted by Leonard Arrington and Davis Bitton,
The Mormon Experience: London, 1979, p. 101.

but also for the benefit of those who would follow their trail; in this the Saints were unique among the parties who pioneered the West, the generality of whom were noted for the "process of disruption" ³. that characterized their journeying. Within three months of the planting of the first seeds the Salt Lake Valley was to accommodate nearly two thousand settlers; the labour of the nine was more than symbolic.

Of the nine, two had an acquaintanceship that stretched back over seven years. In 1840 George A. Smith had been set apart to undertake a mission to England and had been one of the lesser known missionaries who, with Saints of the standing of Brigham Young and Wilford Woodruff, comprised the second apostolic mission. Owing to his uncertain health, he had not been afforded the itinerancy of his more eminent colleagues but spent most of his mission in just one area, the pottery towns of North Staffordshire and those villages and towns that were their immediate neighbours. Among those whom he converted had been a young man of twenty who had listened to the sermons and testimony of the Mormon missionary and subsequently offered himself for baptism; George Wardle was thus received into the Mormon Church. Seven summers later, many miles removed from the location of their first meeting, Smith and Wardle shared the labour of sowing seed potatoes in the soil of the Salt Lake Valley. Their task was well advanced when Brigham Young first sighted the valley and gave it his blessing.

3. Ibid.

One of the earliest of Mormon emigrants, Wardle's personal history became interwoven with the larger chronicle of his adopted Church. A wheelwright by trade, he settled in Nauvoo, where he employed his manual skills in the building of wagons which were required to ferry supplies to the city the Mormons hoped to establish as their permanent abode. When their tenure on this settlement upon the bank of the Mississippi became less certain and the Prophet, Joseph Smith, surrendered himself to the authorities in Carthage, Wardle accompanied his spiritual leader and witnessed the events of the 27th June 1844, when, in attempting an escape from the bullets of the Warsaw Militia by jumping from a window in the Carthage jail, Smith was killed. That evening Wardle honoured his former Prophet by standing guard over his body in a vigil of protection and respect. 4.

Consequent upon Joseph Smith's violent death, the decision was taken to abandon Nauvoo and commence the trek west, a journey much romanticized by later generations, although the realities were demanding in the extreme upon those who experienced it. Wardle was one of thousands who crossed the frozen Mississippi, participating in an exodus that was to stretch over several years and thousands of miles, and was to provide an analogy with the wilderness wanderings of the Children of Israel. The winter of 1846 found the Saints camped at various locations in Iowa, the main

4. Lorna Shelton Stott, Life Sketch of George Wardle:
a typewritten history by his granddaughter, 6th June 1956,
C.H.O., Mf. 335.

camp being at Winter Quarters, from where in the spring of the following year the advance party set out for the Valley. In this manner, George Wardle, wheelwright of Cheddleton, Staffordshire, was afforded the privilege of membership of a truly select group of pioneers, one of the nine who, perhaps unaware of the significance of their act, entered the Valley and camped on the future site of Zion. .

George Wardle was to reside in Utah for a further fifty four years, during which he made major contributions to the religious, economic and cultural life of the Saints: he organized the first choir in Salt Lake City; he founded the first brass band there; in Provo he established the Tabernacle choir; in both locations he opened dancing schools and had among his pupils Brigham Young and his long-time mentor, George A. Smith. He experienced the military and political crises of the uneasy relationship of nation and Church, and celebrated the eventual granting of statehood to Utah. His narrative was that of the Church; his achievements were of no little importance in the heroic record of the Church's history, yet, excepting a brief account recorded by a granddaughter a hundred years or so after the major events of his life, he has been accorded no special distinction. His biography fuses into the chronicle of the thousands of fellow Saints who shared similar experiences.

In September 1840, reflecting upon the inaccuracy of his understanding of the British working classes prior to his mission,

Brigham Young felt justified in his complaint that " what we find in history relates more particularly to the higher classes of a nation." 5. The Mormon Odyssey was antipathetic to such a perception of history; its protagonists were of the working classes, humble, disadvantaged economically and educationally, yet progressive in seeking a religion that supplied their needs and which gave truth to both spiritual and secular aspirations. In their respective diaries and journals, their anecdotes of human disaster and triumphs, of uncertainty and conviction, were reflected both individual and collective achievements.

While historians will inevitably concentrate upon leadership or power, the story of the Mormon Church, the development of its British Mission and the effect of that Mission upon the Church in America, is as much the story of the British convert as of the American missionary, of the Saint as of the Apostle, of George Wardle as of Brigham Young. That a Cheddleton wheelwright might guard the fallen body of Joseph Smith or enter the Salt Lake Valley three days before Brigham Young and yet retain his anonymity does not diminish his achievement but rather emphasizes the collective nature of the Church's accomplishment and the loyalty of the convert to his Church.

5. Manuscript History of the British Mission; editor Andrew Jackson, entry under "Diary of the British Mission". Letter from Brigham Young and Willard Richards to Joseph Smith, 5th September 1840.

Of George Wardle it may be claimed that certain of his exploits were individual, yet his overall experiences were not unique. He exemplifies all those who responded to the teachings that were first heard in Britain ten years before the Saints sighted the Salt Lake; he illustrates the contribution of the individual to the collective account of the Church. Above all, the record of his achievement indicates that in any consideration of the Mormon Church, some acquaintance with the individuals who comprised it is essential. In the manner of all faithful servants, George Wardle and the thousands whom he represents, earn a place in this story.

CHAPTER 1.

THE AMERICAN ORIGINS

We do not profess to be polished stones like some of the elders. The more we roll through the forest and get the corners knocked off the better we are. If we were polished and smooth it would deface us to have the surface chipped off. This is the case with Joseph Smith, he never professed to be smooth and polished. Rolling around among the rocks has not hurt him at all, but in the end he will be as polished as any stone, while many who were so very polished in the beginning will become badly defaced. 1.

The obscurity in which the vast majority of impoverished migrant families who attempted to subsist upon the land of Vermont and New York State to the west of the Catskill and Adirondack Mountains lived out their lives was not to be extended to the unremarkable couple who, following their marriage in 1796, endeavoured to establish themselves initially at Tunbridge, Vermont, and subsequently at numerous other locations upon that obdurate land. That the couple, their offspring and family were not to labour and exist in privacy and seclusion they owed to their third son, who took his name from his father and who was to become one of the most controversial and influential figures in nineteenth century America, revered as a prophet by those who remained loyal to his teachings and discourses, reviled by many more who rejected him as an infamous impostor, yet whose name has now for a century

- i. Quoted by Matthias F. Cowley, Wilford Woodruff - History of his Life and Labours : Salt Lake City, 1964, p.192. Discourse, Wilford Woodruff to Heber C. Kimball.

and a half been synonymous with the church he founded in 1830, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, the Mormons.

The ancestry of Joseph Smith, the Mormon Prophet, has been extensively researched, although inevitably, the earlier works, and especially those written during his life or shortly after his murder, were strongly biased, reflecting the inclinations and persuasions of their authors. One of the first works of this type dates from as early as 1834, from the pen of E.D. Howe, the founder of the Cleveland Herald and later the Painsville Telegraph, and marks the first major printed attack upon the newly founded Church. Howe relies upon a number of affidavits, recorded to discredit the Smith family; of these, one by Parley Chase may serve as example of the generalized assault:

I was acquainted with the family of Joseph Smith, Sr., both before and since they became Mormons, and feel free to state that not one of the male members of the Smith family were entitled to any credit whatsoever. They were lazy, intemperate and worthless men, very much addicted to lying. In this they frequently boasted their skill. 2.

Some thirty years later, Pomeroy Tucker who had been acquainted with the Smiths during the formative years of the Church reiterated the above opinion in the Origin, Rise and Progress of Mormonism. Of the Smith family he wrote "they were popularly regarded as an illiterate, whiskey-drinking

2. E.D. Howe, Mormonism Unveiled: published by the author, Painsville, Ohio. p.248.

shiftless, irreligious race of people - the first named, the chief subject of this biography, being unanimously voted the laziest and most worthless of the generation." 3.

Of course, the value of such comment to the historian is extremely questionable; its interest lies in what it reveals of the mind and purpose of its author, rather than in what it records of the Smith family. Conversely, the same is often true of those books written by early converts, of which the most celebrated is the account dictated by the Prophet's mother, Lucy Mack Smith, in 1845, the year following Joseph Smith's death, and originally published in Liverpool in 1853 by Orson Pratt, one of the early missionaries to England. This original edition, however, was disapproved of by Brigham Young who recognized its inaccuracies and ordered that it be destroyed; not until 1901 was a revised and acceptable edition published and distributed. Foremost among the book's statements to be challenged by Young was that it had been written during the life-time of Joseph Smith and that he had read and approved it. The mother's history does, however, offer a valuable, if at times romanticized, insight into the New England background within which her son developed and his Church had its origins and, provided the reader remains aware of the relationship

3. Quoted by W.A. Linn, The Story of the Mormons: London, 1923, p. 12.

between author and subject, it does afford an important dimension to the narrative of the Mormon Church.

That the Smiths were not the "shiftless, irreligious race of people" alluded to by Tucker is one conclusion to be drawn from the published research of their respective families. The paternal Smith line reveals a number of respectable and respected craftsmen who served their communities in various civic capacities. Such a man was Asael Smith, paternal grandfather of the Prophet, who broke from the family home of five generations at Topsfield, Massachusetts, to farm what was then virgin land in the Green Mountains of Vermont. The independent trait of the settler extended to religious matters for Asael attended no established church but was, rather, a Universalist, a believer in universal resurrection, a seeker. In a letter he wrote to Joseph Perkins Towne, town clerk of Topsfield, something of his religious thought is revealed, as is the millennial note he employed when referring to the American Revolution.

He has conducted us through a glorious revolution and has Brought us into the promised land of peace and Liberty, and I Believe that he is about to Bring all the world in the Same Beatitudes in His own time and way. ⁴.

4. Quoted by D. Hill, Joseph Smith, The First Mormon: New York, 1977, p.21. Letter from Asael Smith to Joseph Perkins Towne.

Solomon Mack, maternal grandfather, did not acquire the same social respectability nor achieve similar religious conviction but he was certainly no less interesting. His history he recorded in his chapbook, a forty-eight page book of his life, written when he was seventy-eight. It tells of his involvement in the French and Indian Wars, the Revolution, and concludes with his conversion to the Christian faith in 1810, the year of his book's publication. In his later years - he died in 1820 - he rode the countryside, peddling his chapbook and recounting his adventures. Often depicted as an eccentric, the achievement of Solomon Mack was that he actually wrote his autobiography and had it printed at his own expense; his impulse to self-expression was to re-emerge in his daughter and grandson and succeeding generations of the family.

A pre-occupation with the search for the true church characterized both maternal and paternal lines. Jason, eldest son of Solomon Mack, actually joined the Seekers - a Sect dating from 1645 and teaching that the Scriptures were defective and the true church lost; he organized a commune of thirty families which acted as a co-operative, shipping their surplus produce to Liverpool. This disaffection with existing churches was voiced by Lucy Mack Smith who, following the death of her sister, Lovina, told of her searching the Bible for inspiration:

Notwithstanding my great anxiety to experience a change of heart, another matter would always interpose in all my meditations - if I remained a member of no church, all religious people will say I am of the world, and if I join some of the different denominations, all the rest will say I am in error. No church will admit that I am right except the one with which I am associated. This makes them witnesses against each other, and how can I decide in such a case as this, seeing they are all unlike the Church of Christ, as it existed in former days. ⁵.

This relates to just prior to her marriage to Joseph Smith; Donna Hill dates an interesting corollary from just after that union. She tells of Lucy's searching among the Methodists at that time and Joseph, to please her, accompanying her. When Asael, however, heard of this tentative liaison, he is reputed to have thrown a copy of Paine's Age of Reason at his son and daughter-in-law, a work in which the denunciation of creeds and religious superstitions is of some moment!

Following their marriage, Joseph and Lucy attempted to farm in Vermont, working their holding for six years before renting it to a tenant and opening a store in the neighbouring town of Randolph. It was during this period that the family's fortune reached its watershed, their participating in what proved to be an unsound venture bringing about their loss of wealth, with consequent impoverishment. Joseph hazarded all, including a gift of one thousand dollars given to Lucy upon her marriage

5. L. M. Smith, History of Joseph Smith : Salt Lake City, 1979 edition, p.31. First published Liverpool, 1853.

by her brother Stephen and his business partner, upon a shipment of crystallized ginseng to China, where it was considered a remedy for plagues. Whether this was simply a miscalculation of the market, an act of foolhardiness, or whether, as Lucy Mack Smith maintained, they were cheated out of their return by the merchant to whom they had entrusted the shipment and who subsequently fled to Canada, is a matter for speculation; their loss and its effect, however, are fact. By selling all they possessed, eventually the Smiths paid off all debts and made the first of a series of moves to Royalton. They stayed only a short while before moving to Sharon, Windsor County, Vermont, where on the 23rd December 1805, Joseph Smith Junior was born. Of this birth of a third son to Joseph and Lucy, Fawn Brodie has written: "no comet appeared in the sky at his coming; no alarums startled the countryside. He was accepted that cold winter night probably with more resignation than delight, and was christened without undue ceremony Joseph Smith, after his father." 6.

The first decade of the future Prophet's life is more noted for the migrant habits of the family than for any particularly significant event associated with their son's upbringing. The only point upon which his mother dwells in her biographical portrait is that of his courage when confronted by a diseased bone in the leg and the primitive surgery of those who ministered to him.

6. F.M. Brodie, No Man Knows My History : London, 1963, p.7.

It was conjectured that this brought about a closer relationship between mother and child, than that existing between Lucy Smith and any of her other children.

In 1816, after twenty years of married life, eight children, innumerable moves, familiarity with economic hardship and insecurity, Lucy Smith and her family followed Joseph across the state border into New York, to the town of Palmyra, then a frontier village of log cabins and wooden huts. Of their spiritual well-being at this time, Arrington and Bitton have written

All that can be said of the Smith family as it moved once again in 1816, this time to western New York, is that its members were relatively unchurched yet spiritually inclined and the inheritors of a mild "seeker" tradition that may have been accentuated by the family's economic problems and social conditions on the New York frontier. 7.

Their impecuniosity has been recorded by Lucy Smith: "we were much reduced - not from indolence, but on account of many reverses of fortune, with which our lives had been singularly marked." 8.

In taking up residence in Palmyra at this time, the Smiths were to witness two events which were to exert their respective influences upon the inhabitants of the area. The first of these

7. L.J. Arrington and D. Bitton, Op. cit. : p.4.

8. L. M. Smith, Op. cit. : p. 63.

was the construction of the Erie Canal, linking the Great Lakes with the port of New York, a remarkable project, a by-product of which was the marked increase in land prices in areas bordering the proposed route of the canal; the Smiths arrived as these prices peaked and the family inevitably suffered. The second of the two occurrences, however, was to have a more significant effect upon the family, for they were to experience at first-hand the Second Great Awakening,⁹ one of the intense religious revivals to strike western New York State and earn for that area the title of the "Burnt-over District", since the ground was fired so many times by evangelists intent on completing the harvest ritual. Arrington and Bitton refer to this particular area as a "tinderbox", ready for ignition;¹⁰ Thomas O' Dea observes that the inhabitants of western New York had revolted from the bleaker teachings of Calvinism and had a deeply established tradition of dissent, it being the "peculiar genius of the people of the area that everything they touched went to extremes;"¹¹ Fawn Brodie paints a picture of evangelists swarming over the hill country and organizing

9. The Second Great Awakening is the generalized term for a series of religious revivals concentrated upon western New York State, commencing in 1799-1800 and peaking during the mid 1820s. It encompassed a spectrum of religious belief from radical movements to the conservative Congregationalists and Presbyterians.

10. L.J. Arrington and D. Bitton, *Op. cit.* : p. 3.

11. T.F. O' Dea, The Mormons : Chicago, 1957, p.11.

large and enthusiastic camp meetings. She observes that "Palmyra was the center of what the circuit riders later called the burnt-over district. One revival after another was sweeping through the area, leaving behind a people scattered and peeled, for religious enthusiasm was literally being burnt out of them." 12. Charles Finney, a Presbyterian, was the most famous and, according to O' Dea, the most sensational and unrestrained evangelist to be encountered at this time; within two decades he was to extend his mission to include Great Britain and before the first Mormon missionaries landed in that country, his Lectures on Revivals was to go through its first edition there.

Revivalism tended to foster innovation and consequently division. This was true of western New York as various innovative reformers acted out their religion in that area. Several communities of Shakers could be located in the region, one group being within thirty miles of Palmyra, while the Community of the Publick Universal Friend, the followers of Jemima Wilkinson, also made this location their home. Further afield, in northern Ohio, could be found the Disciples of Christ, a sect which had broken away from the Baptists under the leadership of Alexander Campbell. Within this church, the chief revivalist preacher was Sidney Rigdon who was subsequently to play a major role within the Mormon Church during its early years. As Joseph Smith was to do, the Campbellites denounced the existing denominations

12. F.M. Brodie, Op. cit. : p.14.

and preached what they termed a restored gospel.

The region within which Mormonism was to be founded and developed was permeated with conflicting religious thought. The mainstream of church members would belong to the Episcopalian, Presbyterian, Congregational, Methodist, Baptist or Roman Catholic Churches but, of the American population, this would represent only some ten percent; 13. the vast majority was unchurched. While in Europe there still existed a pattern of state churches, in America the lack of religious consensus was apparent to all and the process of fragmentation continued. Revivalism was an attempt to counteract this indifference and became the primary means for converting the unchurched and supporting the indifferent.

Of the innovatory sects or churches spawned by or active during the period of the Second Great Awakening, small, isolated groups of adherents have survived into the twentieth century, but they have never regained the influence and authority they experienced at that time. The one exception, of course, was the Church that is the subject of this study, and whose founder and Prophet was certainly not unaffected by the frenzy of religious activity among which he grew up.

13. L. J. Arrington and D. Bitton, Op. Cit.: p. 27.

During this time of great excitement, my mind was called up to serious reflection and great uneasiness; but though my feelings were deep, and often poignant, still I kept myself aloof from all those parties, though I attended their several meetings as often as occasion would permit. In process of time my mind became somewhat partial to the Methodist sect, and I felt some desire to be united with them, but so great were the confusion and strife among the different denominations that it was impossible for a person, young as I was, and so unacquainted with men and things, to come to any certain conclusion who was right and who was wrong. My mind at different times was greatly excited, the cry and tumult were so great and incessant. The Presbyterians were most decided against the Baptists and Methodists and used all the power of either reason or sophistry to prove their errors, or at least to make the people think they were in error. On the other hand, the Baptists and Methodists, in their turn, were equally zealous in endeavouring to establish their own tenets and disprove all others.

In the midst of this war of words and tumult of opinion, I often said to myself, What is to be done? Who of all these parties are right? or, are they all wrong together? If any one of them be right, which is it? and how shall I know it?

While I was laboring under the extreme difficulties caused by the contests of these parties of religionists, I was one day reading in the epistle of James, first chapter and fifth verse, which reads, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given to him." Never did any passage of Scripture come with more power to the heart of man than did at this time to mine. ^{14.}

The young Joseph Smith, who was fifteen at this stage, concluded that he had alternatives: either he remained in darkness and confusion or he heeded the writing of St. James and asked for wisdom of God. He tells of retiring to some nearby woods on that spring morning in 1820 and there kneeling in prayer. According to

14. History of the Church, Volume 1 : ed. B. H. Roberts, Salt Lake City, 1902, pp. 3 - 4.

his account, a darkness gathered around him, this being followed by the appearance of a pillar of light in which he was able to distinguish two persons who advised him that he was to join none of the churches for they were all wrong, their creeds being an abomination in the sight of God.

Smith claims to have received his second vision on the evening of 21st September 1823; as he prayed a figure at his bed-side appeared and announced himself as Moroni, a messenger from God, who had a task for Smith to perform. The figure disclosed that a book of golden plates was deposited in the vicinity, this book giving an account of the former inhabitants of the continent, the source from which they came and Moroni added that the "fulness of the everlasting gospel was contained in it, as delivered by the Saviour to the ancient inhabitants." 15. With the book would be found the Urim and Thummin, two stones which God had prepared to assist in the translating of the golden plates. Smith records that the figure, Moroni, returned twice during the night to repeat the message and to instruct Smith that he should relate all to his father.

The next day, while labouring in the fields, Smith was again visited by Moroni who repeated that the young man should inform his father of what he had been told. This he did before repairing

15. Ibid: p. 11.

to the place where, he had been informed, the golden book was deposited, a hill some four miles from Palmyra which became known as the Hill Cumorah. There on the west side of the hill, under a boulder of considerable size he found the plates in a stone box. Removing the earth, he "obtained a lever which I got fixed under the edge of the stone, and with a little exertion raised it up. I looked in, and there, indeed, did I behold the plates, the Urim and Thummin, and the breast-plate, as stated by the messenger." 16. The angel informed the young man that he was forbidden at that time to remove the plates; he was to return on the anniversary of the occasion every year, until such time as he received further instructions. This he did on the 22nd September 1824, but, not fulfilling the letter of Moroni's instructions and thinking to gain pecuniary advantage from the contents of the buried box, he returned home empty handed. Indeed, it was not until his fifth annual visit, on 22nd September 1827, that Joseph Smith finally proved himself a worthy custodian and took possession of the plates.

In the meantime he had gained some notoriety as a glass locker, assisting Josiah Stool (sometimes spelled Stowell) in a money digging operation to find a lost silver mine in the Susquehanna Valley. The expedition came to nothing but the repercussions were many. Lucy Smith states that Joseph endeavoured to divert Stool from his pursuit but the latter was inflexible. The outcome, however, was that a nephew and neighbour of Stool had the young Smith arrested on a charge of being a disorderly person

16. Ibid : p. 15.

and an impostor. The trial was held before a Justice of the Peace in Bainbridge, Chenango County, New York, on 20th March 1826. Stoal spoke in Smith's defence but, according to the record of the trial, only condemned him by telling of other occasions when Smith had used a peep-stone. Smith was found to be guilty but no record of a sentence has subsequently been uncovered.

The activity has, however, led to a number of attacks being made upon the honesty and character of Joseph Smith. William Alexander Linn ¹⁷. has assembled a number of statements from people contemporary with Smith, to advance an argument that throughout the period 1820 to 1827 Joseph Smith was involved in a series of money-digging or treasure-seeking incidents. Such research, undertaken after the Mormon Church had been founded, was intended to discredit Smith and, by implication, to ridicule his alleged finding of the golden plates; in short the suggestion was that his claim to have been led to the plates by divine revelations was simply an extension of his deceit practised upon his neighbours by his use of a peep-stone.

The other repercussion of Joseph Smith's working for Stoal was his meeting with Emma Hale, at whose father's house the future Prophet boarded. Isaac and Elizabeth Hale were devout Methodists

17. William Alexander Linn, Op. cit. : p. 20.



Joseph Smith

Charles W Carter Collection, Church Archives,
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter - Day Saints.

who apparently objected to the prospect of their daughter marrying Smith, for when that event occurred it was contrary to the parents' wishes and without their knowledge. Smith and his bride eloped and journeyed to his parents' home where they took up residence and from where, on the night of 21st September 1827, Joseph travelled the few miles to the Hill Cumorah from whence he successfully extracted the golden plates. That his intention was known to others is suggested by the presence of Staal and a family friend, Knight, at the Smith household on that evening; it is further substantiated by a local farmer, Martin Harris, who claimed that Joseph Smith Senior had informed him of the plates some two or three years previous to their coming into the possession of the younger Smith. Finally the hostility of many of the neighbours and their elaborate attempts to locate the golden plates, according to the narrative of Lucy Mack Smith, indicates the degree of local knowledge concerning the alleged finding of these items. 18.

Joseph and Emma moved with the plates and other treasures to Harmony, Pennsylvania, to a house on Isaac Hale's property, and there, with Emma acting as scribe, the work of translation commenced. This work was financed by the farmer, Martin Harris, who initially made Smith a gift of fifty dollars. Moroni's commands forbade Smith's showing the plates to Harris but, upon

18. L.M. Smith, *Op. cit.*: p. 105.

the latter's insistence - in which instance Harris was certainly reacting to his wife's pressures - he was shown a copy of the engraved characters which, according to Smith were "reformed Egyptian". To satisfy himself and, more particularly, to satisfy his wife, Harris was permitted to take these for their evaluation by the most appropriate authorities. The ensuing story is now part of Mormon lore.

I went to the city of New York, and presented the characters which had been translated, with the translation thereof, to Professor Anthony, a gentleman celebrated for his literary attainments; - Professor Anthony stated that the translation was correct, more so than any he had before seen translated from Egyptian. I then showed him those which were not yet translated, and he said that they were Egyptian, Chaldeac, Assyriac, and Arabac; and he said that they were true characters. He gave me a certificate, certifying to the people of Palmyra that they were true characters, and that the translation of such of them as had been translated was also correct. I took the certificate and put it into my pocket, and was just leaving the house, when Mr. Anthony called me back, and asked me how the young man found out that there were gold plates in the place where he found them. I answered that an angel of God had revealed it unto him.

He then said to me, 'let me see that certificate.' I accordingly took it out of my pocket and gave it to him, when he took it and tore it to pieces, saying that there was no such thing as ministering of angels, and that if I would bring the plates to him, he would translate them. I informed him that part of the plates were sealed, and that I was forbidden to bring them. He replied, 'I cannot read a sealed book.' I left him and went to Dr. Mitchell, who sanctioned what Professor Anthony has said respecting both the characters and the translation. 19.

Professor Charles Anthon was professor of classical studies at Columbia University. The Dictionary of American Biography acknowledges that "for thirty years, about the middle of the nineteenth century, his influence upon the study of the classics in the United States was probably greater than that of any other man." Additionally Stanley B Kimball has shown that at the time of his interview with Harris, Anthon was acquainted with the study of the Egyptian language. His account of the interview, given to E. D. Howe, differs from that of Harris; Anthon states that at first he concluded that the characters were merely a hoax but, as the interview proceeded, he determined they they were part of a scheme to delude Harris and secure the farmer's money. 20.

The Anthon transcript, as it has become known, has intrigued Mormon historians for a century and a half. What can be said with authority is that the meeting between Harris and Anthon did take place and that Harris left sufficiently satisfied for him subsequently to mortgage his farm and raise the three thousand dollars required for the printing of the Book of Mormon in 1830.

Harris followed the Smiths to Harmony upon his return from Anthon, and there he replaced Emma as scribe. In all, 116 pages were dictated by June 1828, when Harris requested that he be permitted to show the translation to his wife who was becoming increasingly critical of his involvement. While thus entrusted

20. E. D. Howe, Op. cit.: pp. 270-272.

to Harris, the 116 pages disappeared, according to Lucy Smith, stolen by Mrs. Harris. ^{21.} Whether this was so, and if so, whether Mrs Harris had calculated the difficulties that would arise, is a further matter for conjecture. As no copy of the translation had been kept, any second translation would differ from the former, and should the former then come to light, discrepancies would be obvious. The matter was resolved by revelation: rather than retranslate, Smith was commanded to turn to other plates which gave a similar but not identical account. Now working with Oliver Cowdery, a school-teacher who had lodged with the elder Smiths, the work of translation recommenced and was completed by June 1829.

A further revelation at this time instructed Smith that Harris, Cowdery and David Whitmer, at whose father's house much of the work of translation had occurred should be given a sight of the golden plates. Their written testimony to this now prefaces the Book of Mormon; they recorded having seen the plates and also knowing "that they have been translated by the gift and power of God, for his voice hath declared it unto us; wherefore we know of a surety that the work is true," ^{22.} Shortly afterwards a further eight witnesses were likewise permitted to view the plates and duly recorded their experience. Upon the evening of the latter experience, Joseph Smith delivered

21. L. M. Smith, Op. cit.: p. 131.

22. Book of Mormon : The Testimony of Three Witnesses.

the plates into the hands of an angel; the work of translation was now concluded.

Using the three thousand dollars raised by Harris, Joseph Smith arranged for the printing of five thousand copies of the book by Egbert B. Grandin of Palmyra. The first editions were to be sold at one dollar twenty five cents. Eleven days after the publication of the Book of Mormon, on 6th April 1830, at a meeting held at the home of Peter Whitmer Senior, in Fayette, New York, the Church of Christ - this being its original title - was formally organized. It was later referred to as the Church of the Latter-Day Saints and in 1838 took the full title, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, the name suggesting the millennial belief of its followers.

Prior to its being officially organized as a Church, Mormonism had already attracted some few believers and, for a multitude of reasons, a vast number of detractors. The story of Joseph Smith and his golden plates had been in currency for some time and branches of what was thus known as a Church existed in Manchester and Colesville, both in New York State. Now, believers in Smith's revelations accepted a missionary role and went forth preaching and attempting to sell the Book of Mormon, the Prophet's father being foremost among these. To illustrate its speed and development, two instances may be cited. While undertaking a mission, Samuel, a brother of Joseph Smith, stopped at the house of John P. Greene, a Methodist preacher, who at that time was absent

from home.²³ Samuel left a copy of the Book of Mormon with Mrs. Greene who had accepted him with kindness. She in turn got her husband to read it upon his return, before she passed it on to her brother, Phineas Young, from whom it reached Brigham Young and then was passed through the family to Heber C. Kimball. In this way both the second President of the Church and one of the first missionaries to Britain were reached and a method upon which the Mormons were to rely, that of a chain action involving the extended family, was employed. The second mission which illustrates the growth of the new Church occurred late in 1830 when four missionaries were directed to travel to Missouri to preach to the Indians. Set aside for this mission were Cowdery, Peter Whitmer, Ziba Peterson and Parley P. Pratt. En route at Kirtland, Ohio, they met and converted the Campbellite preacher, Sidney Rigdon, who had actually broken from the main body of that movement and formed a sizeable independent church. Many of his congregation also embraced the new doctrine and thus Kirtland and nearby Hiram acquired a prominence within the recently founded body. Within a year Kirtland was to become the centre of the Mormon faith while Rigdon was to play a major and forceful role in advancing the cause of the Latter-Day Saints. The four missionaries proceeded beyond Kirtland, travelling some 1,500 miles on foot, to Independence, Missouri, where a further base was established. Thus within the first year of its formal organization, the Mormon Church was extending its influence and its boundary to what was then

23. L. M. Smith, Op. cit. : pp. 187-188.

the western frontier.

In February 1831 Joseph and Emma Smith arrived in Kirtland in response to a letter from John Whitmore who had been placed in charge of the Church there. At Kirtland they found a Church of approximately one hundred members who were shortly to be joined by eighty converts from New York State including the Prophet's parents. The details of this first migration have been supplied by Lucy Smith who tells of the hardships suffered and the seemingly miraculous clearing of a pathway through the iced-up harbour at Buffalo.

In the same month, Joseph Smith claimed to have received a revelation which required that he establish the law of consecration which, in effect, was the outline for a communal society. All land should be consecrated to God and the members of the Church would then receive land according to their needs, this land to be held in stewardship. The same was to apply to all goods, the surplus of which was to be held and administered by a bishop of the Church, a position to which Edward Partridge was appointed. Fawn Brodie ²⁴. suggests that the guiding hand behind this law belonged to Sidney Rigdon whose own followers in Kirtland had practised a communistic society and who had been present in April 1829 at the extended debate between Alexander Campbell and Robert Owen, whose own experiment at New Harmony, Indiana, had been highly influential, although by the date of the debate it was disintegrating quite markedly. It was with the Saints from Colesville who had sold all and travelled to Kirtland that the law of consecration

24. F. M. Brodie, Op. cit.: p. 105

was first applied, lands being donated for their use by earlier settlers. It was not, however, one of Smith's successful enterprises and when within a year they found themselves under financial pressure and experiencing hardship, a revelation directed that they should leave Kirtland for Missouri, where Cowdery had remained and which Joseph had visited in July 1831. The revelation declared that Independence was to be regarded as Zion, the promised land; perhaps this enthusiasm was vindicated by history, as Kansas City sprang from its environs! What it meant for the Mormon Church, however, in 1832 was that it now had two established settlements, separated by some eight hundred miles.

In both locations the Church grew; paradoxically it was out of this growth and expansion that strife developed. By the summer of 1833, there were in excess of one thousand Mormons attempting to settle in Jackson County, Missouri; their sympathies for the Indians and black Americans caused the earlier Missouri settlers to fear them. These sympathies were always a matter for dissension; the Mormons, of course, recalling the statements in The Book of Mormon, saw the Indians as descended from the tribes of Israel. Their relationship with black Americans has been rather ambivalent but in those early days many freed slaves joined the Mormon Church and went to Missouri. The result was persecution and harassment as the Missourians attempted to drive the Mormons from Jackson County. On May 5th 1834, an army raised by Joseph Smith for the relief of Mormons in Missouri, left Kirtland and took forty days to reach Salt River, Missouri.

The action was seen as a crusade and the force took the title of Zion's Camp. In fact, whatever the fears of conflict, no real blows were struck. The Mormons in Independence had been dispersed before the arrival of its relief force, which had itself encountered an enemy against which it was largely powerless - cholera. Many were struck down by the epidemic; the army that returned to Kirtland was infinitely smaller than that which responded to the call.

In Kirtland there were also problems to be resolved. The law of consecration had not been successful and had caused the Prophet's authority to be questioned. The major difficulties, however, were financial rather than spiritual and arose from the Church's expansion, its building and its land speculation. The Church had incurred debts in purchasing land, in obtaining goods on credit in the east and transporting them to Kirtland and in financing the building of the Temple in Kirtland, the foundation stone of which had been laid in 1833. To meet these debts the Kirtland Banking Society was proposed, whereby the Church would open its own bank and print its own notes, guaranteeing these notes by the land it held and the specie the bank possessed in its vaults. The Mormon Church was not alone in attempting to open a bank in Ohio at this time; it was in part reflecting the increased demand for currency in what was still the American frontier. Between 1830 and 1836 the number

of authorized banks operating in Ohio increased from eleven to thirty-three. ²⁵. However, the Kirtland Banking Society was not to figure in this number for the Ohio legislature declined to grant it a charter. Smith responded to what he saw as prejudice against his Church by changing the name of his venture; the Kirtland Safety Society Bank Company was amended in title, the prefix "anti" and the suffix "ing" being added to "Bank", so that its notes, thus over stamped, read the Kirtland Safety Society Anti-Banking Company. For a short period it prospered as its notes were used to pay off debts but by February 1837 - the bank had commenced trading on 2nd January of that year - a writ was issued against Smith and just twenty seven days after it opened, it was forced to suspend its business. Throughout its short existence, the bank had operated contrary to state law, for which contravention Smith was fined a thousand dollars in March.

The stories and accusations relating to this disastrous banking venture are legion. The exact amount of the debt incurred by those involved will never be calculated since many members of the Church, acting out of loyalty, did not press their claims. Fawn Brodie has estimated that the debt to non-Mormons, however, exceeded one hundred and fifty thousand dollars. ²⁶. To Lucy Mack Smith, the blame for the bank's failure rested firmly upon

25. F.M. Brodie, Op. cit. : p. 195.

26. Ibid : p. 202.

the cashier, Warren Parrish, whom she accused of embezzlement;²⁷. Parrish made counter-claims that the amount held in specie never exceeded six thousand dollars, rather than the sixty thousand that Joseph Smith claimed. Several apostates later reiterated this claim, stating that many of the specie boxes held a variety of heavy materials and only had a top layer of silver coin, thus implying that a fraud had been perpetrated upon those who trusted the bank. Whatever the truth, the result is beyond dispute : to many the Prophet had been seen as fallible and his credibility was questioned.

By 1837, the Mormon Church and its founder had witnessed and still were witnessing an hostility towards them that was not accorded to other minority groups in a country which supposedly advocated the tolerance of all religious beliefs. The Mormon Church, however, was clearly manifesting its separateness, offending some and, in the opinion of many, threatening those who lived in the vicinity of Church members. There was developing a collection of "evidence" that pointed to the claims of Joseph Smith being fraudulent. The affidavits collected by Hurlbut and published by E.D. Howe figured among these, as did the more controversial activities of Smith's earlier years. His claim that the Book of Mormon had been divinely inspired and that its content, therefore, was sacred had inevitably excited ridicule and distaste which were further reinforced by the suggestion that

27. L. M. Smith, Op. cit. : p. 240.

Smith had plagiarised an earlier, unpublished work, The Manuscript Found. A certain Solomon Spaulding, at one time a minister of religion, had written a fictional account of the early inhabitants of America and, while no publisher could be found for this work, its content had become known to his neighbours as a result of his readings.

E. D. Howe in Mormonism Unveiled asserted this argument in his strident attack upon the recently founded Church. 28. Other printed criticisms appeared in various newspapers, for the Mormon Church in its beliefs was challenging accepted values. In Missouri, Mormon attitudes to the Indians and resident Negroes provoked further conflict as did the political problem that they posed since their block vote could have a serious effect upon local elections. Their taking members from existing churches was a religious threat, while their economic separateness was hardly to be supported by local merchants. By the time the Kirtland Safety Society Anti-Banking Company failed, Joseph Smith and other Mormon leaders had already experienced physical violence, the first assault upon Smith occurring in March 1831 when he and Rigdon were tarred and feathered by a mob. Now, with the demise of his bank, Smith was to be assailed both from without and within his Church.

It was at this time that the first Mormon missionaries to Britain were appointed and set aside for this task. Indeed,

28. E. D. Howe, *Op. cit.*: pp. 278-287.

Brodie suggests that the decision to embark upon a British mission resulted from the internal pressures upon Smith who saw the opportunity of removing certain Elders from Kirtland. "The best way to ensure the loyalty of his men was to send them on missions, where they could lose their petty grievances in preaching the purity of the gospel." 29. A number of other historians of the Mormon Church have reached similar conclusions : M. Hamlin Cannon has written that " while the dissension was at its height, Joseph Smith decided to send the twelve Apostles on missions lest they be affected ;" 30. while Richard L. Evans in introducing his history of the British Mission observed that "it would be pleasing to record that all was well within the church when the Gospel first came to Britain in 1837, but history deals with stern realities." 31.

Whatever the factors that determined the founding of the British Mission, its inception co-incided with great unrest within the Church. Cowdery and the Whitmers were among those who apostatized; in fact they were instrumental in the founding of a separate church. In Smith's absence - he spent a part of the year in Missouri - there were bitter recriminations and

29. F. M. Brodie, Op. cit.: p. 204.

30. M. Hamlin Cannon, "Migration of English Mormons to America", in American Historical Review : 1947, p. 437.

31. Richard L. Evans, A Century of Mormonism in Great Britain : Salt Lake City, 1937, p. 10.

both physical and legal action against leaders of the Church became frequent. Brigham Young, who had joined the Church in 1832 was forced to flee and one month later, pursued by threats and law suits, Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon, with their families, did likewise. Their journey was westwards; their destination Far West in the State of Missouri. Their departure created a void in Kirtland, both Church and town going into decline. Many, including a number who had turned against Smith, reconsidered and followed him to Missouri, the wagon train that set out from Kirtland on 6th July 1838 exceeding a mile in length. Kirtland itself was to be swallowed up by Cleveland.

In Far West Smith was given a rapturous reception by the fifteen hundred Saints living there. In fact, so numerous had they become that they could not be contained in Caldwell County which had been designated for their use, but they began to settle in the neighbouring counties, Daviess, Carroll and Ray, much to the suspicion and concern of earlier settlers there. To the north of Far West, the township of Adam-ondi-Ahman was proclaimed where, according to Smith, Adam had dwelt upon his expulsion from the Garden of Eden.

The saga of Far West is dramatic, if covering little time. Mormons who had come to Missouri earlier than Smith were not unfamiliar with the power of mob feeling; indeed non-Mormons likewise were accustomed to violence and lynchings, as witness any history of the territory. There appears to have grown a

resolve among the Mormon settlers to defend themselves, to which end a secret society, the Danites, was formed. At the laying of the cornerstone of the Far West Temple, an inflammatory speech was made by Rigdon in which he spoke about exterminating their enemies and a feeling of militancy was prevalent. In the Davies County elections trouble ensued from the use of the Mormon vote. When the mob attacked Mormons at the settlements of De Witt on the Missouri River, the Mormons retaliated and a state of warfare existed. Governor Lilburn Boggs, who claimed a special place in the history of the persecution of the Saints, issued the much quoted command to General Clarke : " The Mormons must be treated as enemies and must be exterminated or driven from the state." 32. Two thousand militia surrounded Far West and, to save further atrocities, Smith and other leaders, including Rigdon surrendered. The Mormons were forced to leave Far West and were relieved of their arms. Joseph Smith and those most closely associated with him were held in Liberty jail for six months before being taken to Daviess County for trial; en route there, probably with the complicity of their guards, they escaped and fled out of the state to Quincy in Illinois where they were received with sympathy and rejoined many who had journeyed there from Far West.

A small group of Mormons had settled there as early as 1832,

32. Donna Hill, *Op. cit.*: p. 234.

but for his permanent settlement Smith chose a tract of marsh and unhealthy land a further fifty miles north on the Mississippi at Commerce. To this region of swamp he gave the name Nauvoo, which he claimed was Hebrew for beautiful plantation. The early history of Nauvoo was remarkable : the area was divided into lots and the symmetry of the city developed; converts from the east were instructed to sell their property there and use the money to purchase land in Nauvoo from the appointed agent; immigration was encouraged and converts from Britain arrived via New Orleans and the fifteen hundred miles of the Mississippi. The city was granted a charter which in effect made it autonomous it developed its own militia, two thousand strong by 1842, and these were regularly drilled, much to the consternation of neighbouring non-Mormons. On 6th April 1841 - the eleventh anniversary of the founding of the Church - the foundation stone for the Nauvoo Temple was laid. All this was achieved against a background of disease and epidemic, for the swampland was a breeding ground for mosquito and similar disease carrying insects. The death toll was considerable, including Smith's father, his younger brother, and a newly born son, Don Carlos.

Many of the problems the Church had faced at Kirtland, Far West and the other Missouri settlements, emerged again at Nauvoo. Non - Mormons were fearful of their strength and the military threat they were felt to pose. Donna Hill, in her recent biogra

of Smith, quotes one such settler:

They must and will take the world. And if they cannot do it by preaching they will by the force of arms. They therefore incorporate military tacticks with their religion it is said they train Saturday and are well disciplined it is said they take the liberty to tell the people that they now come with the Bible in their hands but ere long they will come with the sword also by their side. 33.

There was concern at the enormous block vote that the Mormons could exercise and at the Prophet determining where this should be given. Politicians of both parties courted the Mormon vote. The economic separateness of the church was a further cause for anxiety; settlements nearby were jealous of the commercial success of the new city, foremost among these settlements being Warsaw, whose local newspaper was particularly outspoken. There was the recurring problem of apostasy, including one John Cook Bennett who had risen to prominence within the Church but was subsequently excommunicated for immorality, whereupon he campaigned against the Church in the columns of many newspapers. The most bizarre attack upon Smith, however, related to the Mormon's old enemy, Lilburn Boggs, ex-governor of Missouri. An attack upon Boggs' life was attributed to Smith and a warrant was issued against him which was to result in protracted action and argument.

The most damning criticism of the Mormons, however, emanated

33. Ibid : p. 286.

from Joseph Smith's claim to have received a revelation in July 1843, informing him that his church should practise polygamy in keeping with the patriarchs of the Old Testament. Of all the issues to be raised by the Mormon Church, that of polygamy has been most closely associated with its public image and has occasioned most scorn and ridicule. Cartoonists have delighted in depicting the Mormon Elder in bed with his various wives and this situation has been described in many exposés. By the time of the revelation, Joseph Smith had almost certainly been practising plural marriage; ³⁴. detractors, therefore, have suggested that the revelation was a convenience to cover and "legalize" this activity. Even during the Kirtland period there had been rumour of polygamy, occasioning in August 1835 at a general assembly of the Church, William Phelps' reading of an Article on Marriage in which he reaffirmed monogamy.

Inasmuch as this Church of Christ has been reproached with the crime of fornication and polygamy, we declare that we believe that one man should have one wife, and one woman but one husband, except in case of death, when either is at liberty to marry. ³⁵.

The controversy, and in many instances embarrassment, caused by this revelation has been immense. Many of the brethren were astounded by the revelation and had the greatest difficulty in coming to terms with the implications. Emma, Joseph Smith's wife

34. Ibid : p. 356.

35. Ibid : p. 340.

is reputed to have torn up a copy of the revelation and burnt it, although, writing after the Prophet's death, she denied that he had ever practised polygamy : "he had no other wife but me nor did he to my knowledge ever have. He did not ever have improper relations with any woman that ever came to my knowledge." 36.

What was frequently forgotten in the desire to sensationalize was that polygamy was only practised by a minority of the Church and that certainly there was never any question of the Mormon Church recruiting single females as part of its immigration programme, as malicious tongues and pens would suggest. In fact, where polygamy was practised, it was strictly controlled by the Church and was intended to provide stability in family life. It did, of course, demand an obedience of women which was clearly acknowledged by Eliza R. Snow, the major poetess of the Church and the most famous plural wife of the Prophet Joseph.

We stand in a different position from the ladies of the world; we have made a covenant with God, we understand his order and know that that order requires submission on the part of women. 37.

If Eliza Snow spoke in defence of polygamy, other plural wives have left written accounts of the trials and hardships it induced. In many cases, having become plural wives, they were forced

36. Ibid : p. 359.

37. Jill C. Mulray, "Eliza R. Snow - The Woman Question" in Brigham Young University Studies : Vol 16, No. 2. p.258.

to keep their union secret and live apart from their "husbands", this particularly applying during periods when Mormons were being arrested for practising polygamy. Other women tell of the considerable personal difficulty they experienced in sharing a house and duties with fellow wives. Perhaps we need to remember, however, that while for many women polygamy brought its inevitable pressures, monogamy in frontier America in the 1840s and succeeding decades did not guarantee a life free from strife.

Arrington and Bitton ³⁸. estimate that only five percent of Mormon males presided over polygamous households but this minority included all the leaders of the Church during the fifty years between Smith's revelation and that later received by President Wilford Woodruff which renounced plural marriage. However, in the main, polygamy was practised by those holding positions of authority within the Church; it extended their influence and gave a reality to the image of the Church as a family. The women who embraced it, like their menfolk, saw it as a divine duty, ordained by God. Paradoxical while polygamy may have subjugated Mormon women, they did have freedoms not granted to their non-Mormon counterparts for many years; women received the franchise in Utah in 1870, some five decades before it was afforded to women in the eastern states; they also filled professional positions, especially in medicine, years before non-Mormon women were welcomed to the ranks of surgeons or matrons.

38. L. J. Arrington and D. Bitton, *Op. cit.*: p.199.

The growth of Nauvoo was remarkable by any standards; by 1843 it rivalled Chicago in size. It received visits from the famous and the curious whose responses were as varied as they were themselves. One visitor in March 1842 recorded his impressions in a letter to the Columbus Advocate :

Mr, Editor, Having recently had occasion to visit the city of Nauvoo, I cannot permit the opportunity to pass without expressing the agreeable disappointment that awaited me there. I had supposed from what I had previously heard, that I should witness an impoverished, ignorant and bigoted population, completely priest ridden and tyrannized over by Joseph Smith, the grand prophet of these people. On the contrary, to my surprise, I saw a people apparently happy, prosperous and intelligent - Everyman appeared to be employed in some business or occupation. I saw no idleness, no intemperance, no noise, no riot, all appeared to be contented, with no desire to trouble themselves with anything except their own affairs. With the religion of these people I have nothing to do, if they can be satisfied with the doctrines of their new Revelation, they have a right to be so. 39.

A Catholic historian of this century, Thomas O' Dea, has aptly depicted the achievement of the Mormons by the early 1840s for having been "forced to abandon Kirtland by internal discord, hounded from Independence by force, asked to leave Clay County and driven from Far West by armed violence after a minor war, the Saints had built a great city in Illinois where a few years before there had been little more than a swamp." 40. At the height of Nauvoo's success, Joseph Smith attempted what some

39. Millennial Star: Vol 3, June 1842, p. 24.

40. T.F. O' Dea, Op. cit.: p. 55.

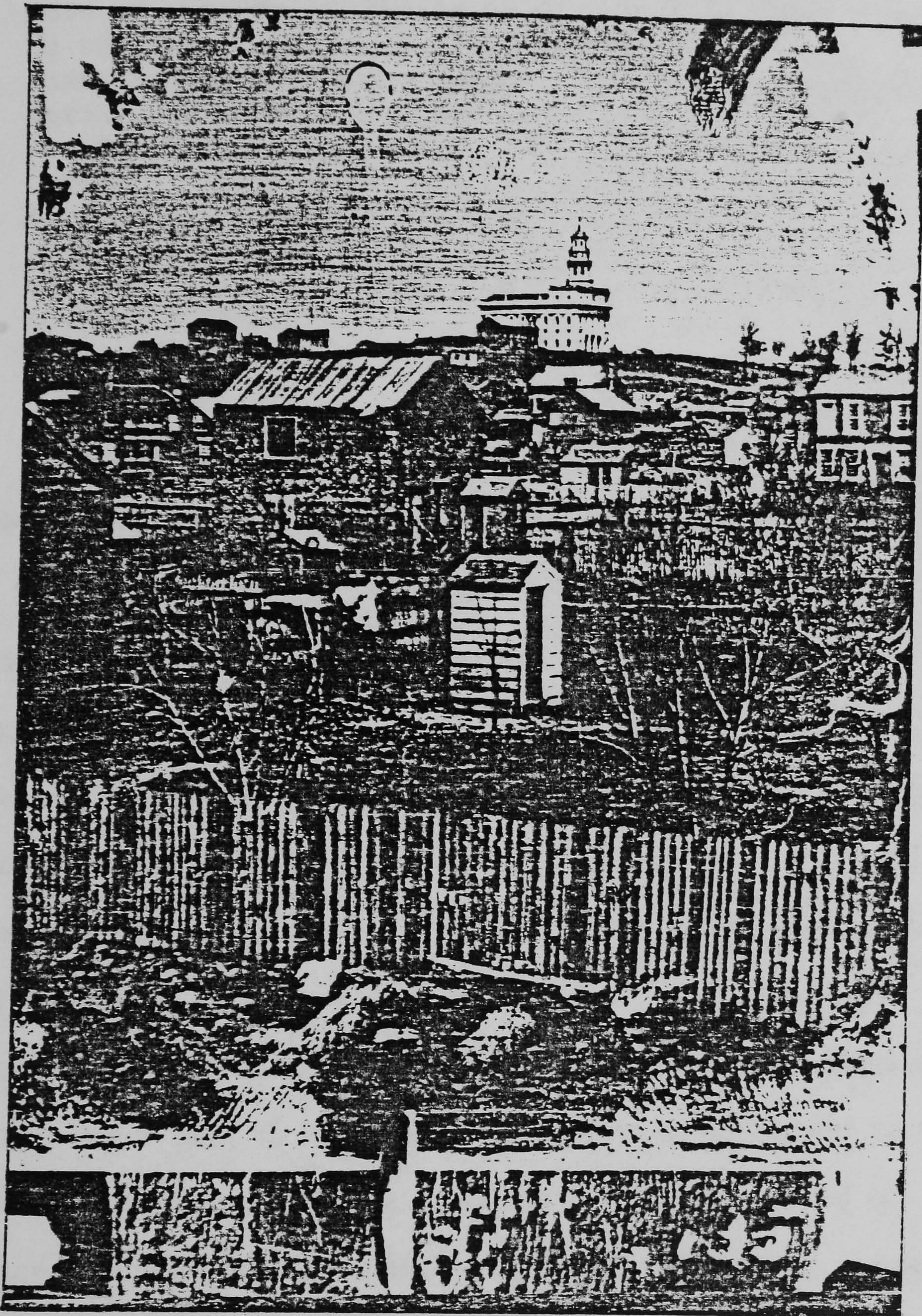
might feel would have been the ultimate - he indicated his intention to stand as a candidate in the Presidential election of 1844. His platform included the abolition of slavery, that felons should work on road building programmes, that prisons should become seminaries of learning and that imprisonment for debt should be revoked.

The cataclysm, however, was fast approaching. As has been observed, with the rapid growth of both Church and city, with success in matters spiritual and temporal, apostasy also increased, and criticisms and fears, thriving upon each other, propagated rapidly. The Church deemed it necessary to excommunicate many who had previously held high office but who now were antagonistic. One such man was William Law who was instrumental in the founding of a reformed church and who printed a newspaper, The Expositor, in which Smith was repeatedly attacked. Particularly incensed by the polygamy revelation, Law was successful in getting the Grand Jury in Carthage to indict Joseph Smith for adultery and polygamy. The Mormons retaliated by destroying the presses of The Expositor.

Although this destruction of a newspaper was not the first to occur, it was one of the more significant. Law and his colleagues received the sympathetic support of many other newspapers, the most outspoken being the Warsaw Signal, its editor Thomas Sharp. On one occasion Sharp had even published

a totally imaginary narrative in which five hundred anti-Mormons had been massacred by ten thousand armed and disciplined Saints. The story concluded with the sacking and burning of Nauvoo. Propaganda had reached this level of viciousness.

At first Smith toyed with fleeing; indeed he commenced flight by crossing the Mississippi into Iowa but returned to Nauvoo and from there travelled to Carthage where he gave himself up together with his brother Hyrum and thirteen other leading Mormons. Eventually, having been charged with treason, Joseph and Hyrum were held in the custody of Carthage jail, only Willard Richards and John Taylor - both early missionaries of the Church to England - remaining with them throughout. There on 27th June 1844, members of the Warsaw Militia, who had been discharged in the morning of that day, returned to Carthage, surrounded the jail and opened fire upon the prisoners. A short battle ensued - Joseph and Hyrum possessed a gun each, these having been smuggled into the prison; Hyrum was shot dead; Willard Richards and John Taylor escaped death and only received slight injury; Joseph Smith in leaping from the window of the jail was fired upon, hit in the back and, subsequently, as his body lay in the jail yard, was fired upon again. In narrating her sons' deaths, Lucy Mack Smith did not dwell upon detail, brevity seemed appropriate.



The Temple, Nauvoo, Illinois. 1846

Charles W. Carter Collection, Church Archives,
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter - Day Saints.

My sons were thrown into jail, where they remained three days in company with Brothers Richards, Taylor and Markham. At the end of this time, the Governor disbanded most of the men, but left a guard of eight of our bitterest enemies over the jail, and sixty more of the same character about a hundred yards distant. He then came into Nauvoo with a guard of fifty or sixty men, made a short speech, and returned immediately. During his absence from Carthage, the guard rushed Brother Markham out of the place at the point of the bayonet. Soon after this two hundred of those discharged in the morning rushed into Carthage, armed and painted black, red and yellow, and in ten minutes fled again, leaving my sons murdered and mangled corpses.⁴¹

With the death of its Prophet, the Church was thrown into a situation of crisis concerning the question of succession. There were many claimants: Sidney Rigdon as counsellor to the Prophet, James J. Strang who claimed to have various documents written by Joseph Smith naming him as successor, and Lyman Wright who had established a Mormon colony in Texas. The real contest, however, was between Sidney Rigdon and Brigham Young, whose strength lay in his being President of the Quorum of the Twelve, the twelve Apostles, whose authority and importance were second only to those of the Prophet during his life-time. The Twelve, in fact, were sustained in office by a vote of the Church at a meeting in Nauvoo on 8th August 1844; Rigdon's claims were rejected - his past record of disaffection doing little to advance his case - and within a month he was excommunicated with a number of his followers, many of whom subsequently denounced and left him when he attempted to initiate

41. L. M. Smith, Op. cit.,: p. 323.

polygamy among them.

The vote that defeated Rigdon was not originally intended to determine a successor to Joseph Smith; rather it was an acknowledgement that the Quorum of the Twelve should preside over the Church since their presence and being emanated from a revelation claimed by Smith.⁴² They alone were capable of providing a stability at that moment; without them the Church was in danger of disintegrating in the face of so many "break-away" movements. Within the Twelve there was much debate before Brigham Young was sustained as President of the Church in succession to Joseph Smith. The Church had delivered itself from its crisis of succession and had determined the pattern for future occasions when a new President should be required; it had also indicated that the power of revelation had been bestowed upon its Presidents.

Of the various groups that defected from the main body of the Mormon Church at this time, only one achieved any lasting importance, that later taking the title the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter - Day Saints. Basically this began with a diversity of disaffected Saints, especially those who looked to Jason W. Briggs, a Wisconsin Mormon, for leadership. Briggs and his supporters believed that they were called upon to preach the original doctrines of the Mormon Church

42. D. Michael Quinn, "The Mormon Succession Crisis of 1844" in Brigham Young University Studies : Vol 16, No. 2, p. 215.

while they awaited a new leader from Joseph Smith's immediate family. This was to be Joseph Smith III who was twelve at the time of his father's death. By the early 1850s the movement to proclaim the young Smith head of the Reorganized Church was growing but it was not until 1860 that he claimed that position. This alternative church renounced almost everything associated with the Nauvoo period and became fundamentalists within the Mormon tradition. Interestingly, the widowed Emma Smith remarried in 1847, her partner being a non-Mormon. She remained in Nauvoo but severed her links with the Church her first husband had founded in 1848 and became a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

The Church, now under the leadership of Brigham Young, was subjected to a series of persecutions during the latter half of 1844. Mormons were harassed by the so-called "wolf-hunts"; those living in out-lying settlements had their crops destroyed and their barns burned plus their persons threatened. The Nauvoo charter which had given the Mormons near autonomy in Nauvoo was rescinded, at the same time Governor Ford informing the Mormons that he could not guarantee to protect them against those who persecuted them. Finally he requested that they leave Illinois.

Although he had not been a party to the founding of the Mormon Church, Brigham Young had been involved in all its major actions since his baptism in 1832. When Joseph Smith had called the Mormons to gather at Kirtland, Young had responded; he had volunteered for Zion's camp; in 1835 he had been appointed one of the Twelve; he had undertaken a mission to Great Britain as well as being active on domestic missions; additionally, he had been involved in the evacuation of Missouri. He was no stranger to persecution and hardship. Now he concentrated upon uniting those who remained loyal to the Church, building the Temple at Nauvoo, commenced by Joseph Smith, and resolving the recurring problem of persecution.

From analysis of the Illinois situation and the needs of the Saints, the resolve to go westwards was reached. One factor which influenced this decision was Young's reading of John C. Fremont's Report of the Exploring Expedition to the Rocky Mountains, 1845, which described a land as yet unsettled, where a group such as the Mormons could enjoy privacy and the autonomy which they desired and which so often had been the cause of conflict. It was resolved that a pioneer party, approximately fifteen hundred strong, should set out for the Rocky Mountains in the spring of 1846 but the pressure of persecutions advanced that date slightly so that on 15th February Brigham Young and company crossed the Mississippi to Iowa from whence the trek westward commenced.

The migration of the Mormons has been romanticized in novels and films; in the diaries and journals of those who undertook it a harsher reality is presented. Many left Nauvoo penniless and ill-prepared for a destination at first vaguely defined. They were not a single company but rather a series of loosely linked groups slowly moving westwards. From the Mississippi, frozen solid in February, they crossed the prairie until they reached the Missouri, just north of its union with the Platte. Here on the west bank, opposite Council Bluffs, they established Winter Quarters at what subsequently became Omaha, Nebraska. It has been estimated that, as the advance party reached Council Bluffs, behind them, scattered over the prairie were two and a half thousand wagons and some twelve thousand Saints, the majority of whom wintered by the Missouri. Of these, some two hundred died during that period.⁴³.

Prior to their leaving Winter Quarters in spring 1847, providence did occasion one act of good fortune to befall the Mormons. America and Mexico were at this period engaged in war. To strengthen America's claim to California, President Polk negotiated with Young for a force of Mormon infantry, five hundred strong, to march to California. It took a year for the infantry to accomplish this feat, the longest march to date in American history. More important, however, were the seventy thousand dollars earned by the members of the Mormon Battalion, money which was urgently required by the migrating

43. L.J. Arrington and D. Bitton, *Op. cit.*: p.98.

Saints.

The advance party, one hundred and forty eight in number and, interestingly, including three coloured Mormons, left Winter Quarters in early April 1847, journeying along the north bank of the Platte to Fort Laramie then on to Fort Bridger and eventually entering the Valley of the Great Salt Lake on 21st July 1847. They had accomplished the journey without professional guides and had shown a thoroughness and perception that characterized that other migration of Mormons, the emigration of Saints from Europe, for as they journeyed they set seed for those who would follow, they established permanent fording places and earned money or goods from other travellers by operating ferries.

Brigham Young was not himself a member of the small party which first entered the valley. He was ill with fever and travelled in the wagon of Wilford Woodruff, arriving in the valley on the 24th. He recorded the occasion in his journal : "The spirit of light rested on us and hovered above the valley, and I felt that there the Saints would find protection and safety." 44.

The founding of Salt Lake City was unique in the history of settlement in America. Other frontier communities developed slowly increasing by a few families at a time or exploded overnight owing to mineral finds. The Mormons had uprooted an

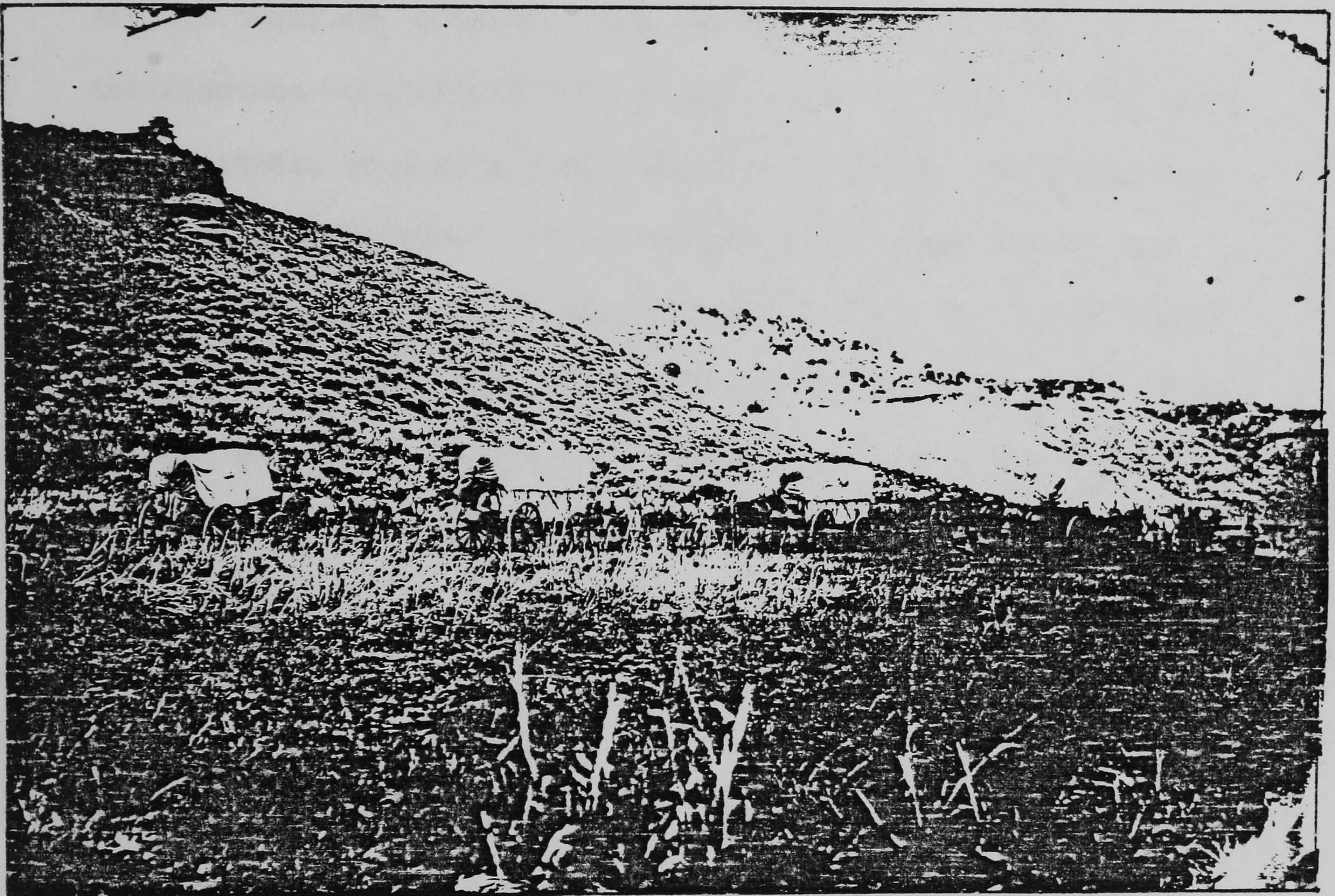
44. Quoted by L. J. Arrington and D. Bitton, *Op. cit.*: p. 101.

entire culture and transplanted it to a completely uninhabited region. O' Dea writes:

Having failed to build Zion within the confines of American Society, the Latter - Day Saints found in the Great Basin the isolation which would enable them to establish a distinctive community based upon their own beliefs and values.⁴⁵

From the outset they developed their new land vigorously. By the time that Young arrived, the first land had been ploughed, a stream dammed for irrigation and seed sown. By the end of October approximately two thousand people had settled in the valley, trade and government had been organized, irrigation schemes developed, neighbouring areas explored. With the Indians who lived in the region there were few problems; the Mormons, of course, had a certain reverence for these successors of the tribes of Israel and, incidentally, prior to reaching the Great Salt Lake, they had received information that one advantage afforded by the area was the docility of the Indians. Inevitably there were to be some conflicts, the most important being the uprising of 1865 when Black Hawk and three hundred warriors conducted a four year campaign against the outlying settlements, many of which were, as a result abandoned. Indian children were adopted by some Mormon families, while some Saints took Indian wives; additionally part of the income from the tithing system was devoted to the needs of the Indians.

45. T. F. O'Dea, *Op. cit.*: p.83.



Kimble and Lawrence C. White Wagon Train between
Echo Head and Hanging Rock, Utah, 1867

Charles W. Carter Collection, Church Archives

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter - Day Saints.

In the early years of settlement the harvests were poor and hunger was certainly not unknown. Untended animals grazed off the crops, wolves and Indians decimated the livestock. The spring harvest of 1848 promised much but, before it could be gathered, a plague of crickets descended upon it. So bad was this visitation that settlers were advised not to dismantle their wagons since the population might have to vacate the valley. At this juncture, however, what was interpreted as divine intervention occurred; flocks of sea gulls appeared and devoured the crickets, so saving what remained of the harvest and giving the settlers new hope. The harvest of 1849 was better and the Mormons at this point again received aid from an unexpected source. The gold fever of California brought many prospectors through the valley, where they traded their goods and wagons or in some cases simply abandoned the latter. Thus an unexpected supply of goods and wealth came to the Saints and fortified them in their desire to stay.

At first the valley was governed by the President and High Council of the Church; in 1849 they declared the area the State of Deseret and applied for statehood. Instead, however, they were granted territorial status with the right to elect the majority of their own officials. In 1852 President Fillmore prudently selected Brigham Young to be governor of the territory, an office he held until 1857 when the then President, James Buchanan, determined to replace him.

The antecedents of this decision were numerous: conflict between the government appointed surveyor general and Mormons who felt threatened by an official survey of lands that were theirs solely through right of occupation; reports by Indian agents of the relationship between Mormons and Indians which did not mirror the relationship that existed between other Americans and the Indian tribes; the conduct and report of the federally appointed judges to Utah who had antagonized the Mormon population.

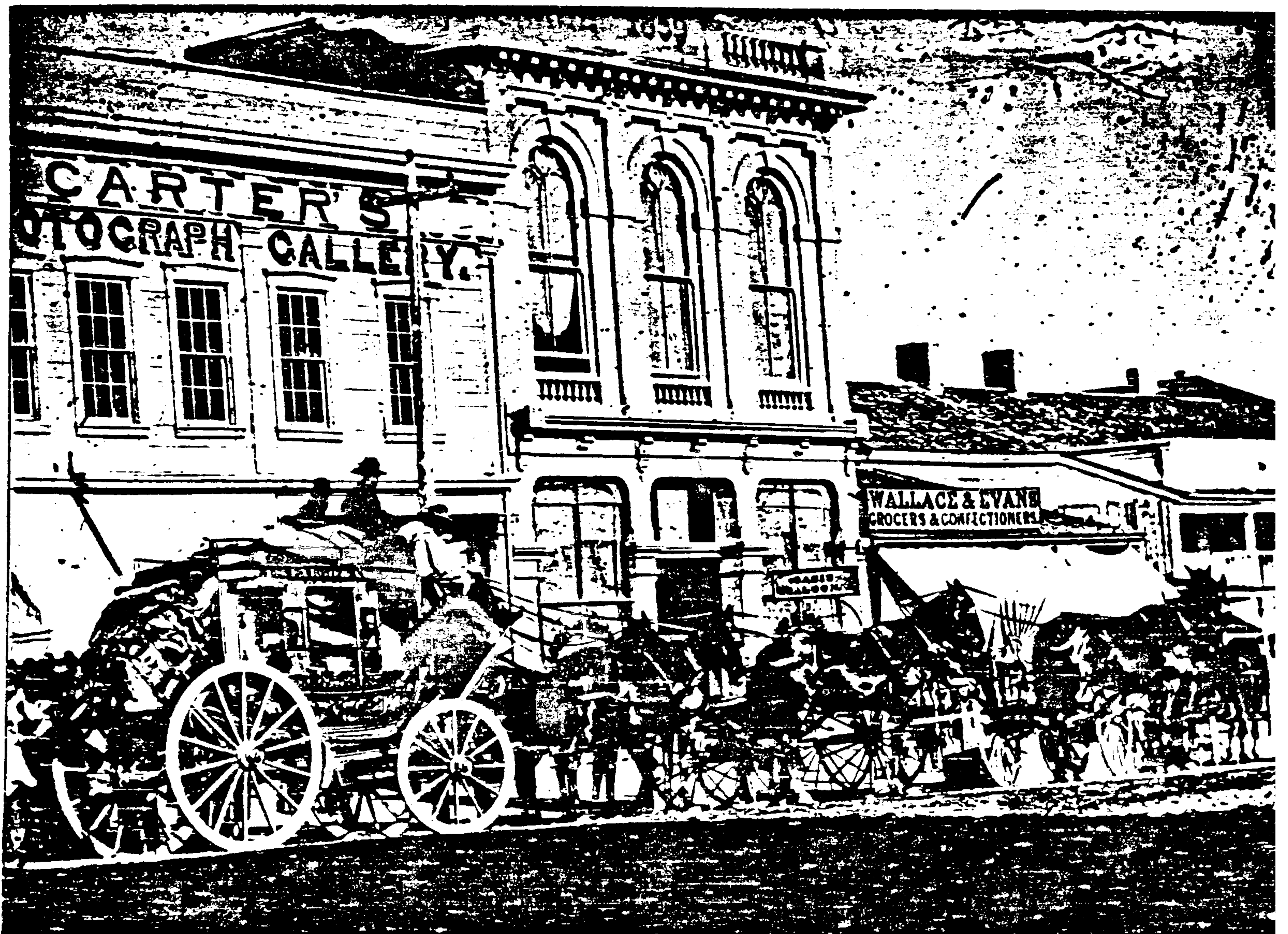
The President, supported by non-Mormon public opinion, decided upon a show of force and dispatched two and a half thousand troops to Utah. To the Mormons this brought memories of Missouri and Illinois, of an unsympathetic if not hostile military. They retaliated by employing a scorched earth policy and destroying the supply points of Fort Bridger and Fort Supply. Wagon trains sent to supply the military were raided, leaving the federal forces on the brink of starvation. In the entire "Mormon War", however, there were surprisingly few casualties, the only exception to this being a company of non-Mormon immigrants travelling by wagon train overland from Missouri and reputedly containing many who had previously persecuted Church members in that state. Approximately one hundred and twenty members of the company were massacred by a combined raiding party of Mormons and Indians. Finally, following protracted negotiations, the Mormons were granted a full pardon, the non-Mormon governor, Cumming, was

installed, the Utah Expedition, the military, established camp some forty miles south of Salt Lake City and provided the Mormons with an economic return since they purchased supplies from Mormon farmers.

The most important incursion into Utah, however, was not accomplished by armed forces or expeditions; that privilege belonged to the railroad. On 10th May 1869 the golden spike was driven into the railway line at Promontory Summit near Ogden at which point the Union Pacific and the Central Pacific met. One year later a branch line was opened from Ogden running south to Salt Lake City which meant that it now became possible for immigrants to journey the entire distance from New York to Salt Lake City by railroad. Brigham Young had seen the potential of the railway at a much earlier date. In fact, on behalf of the Church he invested five thousand dollars in Union Pacific stock when that company was incorporated in 1862. It was, of course, fortuitous for the Mormons that the trans-continental railroad should pass through Utah and so close to their capital. Consistent with their streak of worldliness, they had negotiated a contract for the construction of ninety miles of the track, thus not only earning valuable income but also preserving their separateness since the agreement prevented an influx of non-Mormon railway workers.

In the early years following the founding of Salt Lake City, converts from the east had travelled originally by wagon train and, when even this proved too expensive, by foot, pushing their few belongings in handcarts before them. Part of the argument advocating the use of handcarts was that the "forty-niners" en route to California had travelled on foot with their packs on their backs. This was true, but the argument paid little attention to the differences between the male miners and the family groups of Mormons. The handcart expeditions covered a five year span from 1855 to 1860; the last two companies of 1856, however, are those that have become embedded in Mormon history. They left Winter Quarters too late in the year and became trapped by snow as they crossed the Rockies. Despite attempts from Utah to relieve them, over two hundred died in the mountains. The disasters can be attributed to poor timing and the "unrealistic eloquence" of Mormon leaders⁴⁶ who encouraged the treks. Yet it must be recalled that many parties did cross prairies and mountains in this manner and many missionaries made the journey eastwards from Salt Lake City on foot. Now, within nine years of the last of the handcart treks, the railroad provided an alternative, more comfortable and quicker means of transport, the method whereby minerals mined in Utah could be shipped to the market in the east.

46. P. A. M. Taylor, Expectations Westward : New York, 1966, p.1.



Wells Fargo Stage, Main Street, Salt Lake City, 1868

Charles W. Carter Collection, Church Archives,
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter - Day Saints.

Year by year the Church established new settlements : by the end of 1849 nineteen existed; by 1853 the number had increased to fifty; upon the death of Brigham Young in 1877 the number exceeded three hundred.⁴⁷ Although the Federal Census figures are not entirely accurate and the territory which they cover changes within the period, they do indicate the rapid development of Utah: 11,380 in 1850; 40,273 in 1860; 86,786 in 1870 and 143,963 in 1880;⁴⁸ and this growth occurred in a region that was uninhabited by any but Indians and the odd explorer prior to 1847.

The Mormon achievement in the Valley of the Great Salt Lake was unique. Not since the Puritans landed and settled on the eastern seaboard had such a centrally directed group effort occurred on American soil. Only a concentrated, communal involvement could have achieved survival in that area; there was little room for individual action. Yet it would be wrong to think that stability and prosperity were achieved and sustained without the settlers also experiencing famine and disaster. The early harvests were meagre and, particularly in years when immigration was considerable, were stretched to provide sufficient for all. In 1855 a plague of grasshoppers brought the Saints to near starvation. Numerous winters were severe and many of the herds were wiped out. Additionally, the

47. Ibid : p. 95.

48. Ibid : p. 96.

"Mormon War" severely tested the people, many of whom had to leave their homes. There were, of course, also periods of optimism: the gold rush of 1849 brought a certain prosperity; during the 1850s there was a deliberate effort to achieve self-sufficiency associated with a marked increase in immigrants, especially from Britain, many of whom brought trades and skills, for which there was great demand; and there was the railroad with its many advantages.

Better communications brought their own peculiar problem: the threat of an influx of non-Mormons into Utah which could disturb and even disrupt the economic separateness that the Church felt was essential for its survival. Leonard Arrington has provided a detailed account of the economic practices of the Church during this period, ⁴⁹. from which it can be deduced that the Mormon leadership was acutely aware that economic activity should be kept as far as possible within the framework of their theology. "Mormon theology was never burdened with otherworldliness." ⁵⁰.

The death of Brigham Young in 1877 marked the end of an era. The Saints had achieved their permanent settlement, they had survived repeated migration and the persecution of those who had feared them. Their missionaries had laboured

49. Leonard J. Arrington, Great Basin Kingdom : Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1958, pp. 195 - 231.

50. F. Brodie, *Op. cit.*: p. 187.

in all the accessible countries of the world and had gained surprising success. They had instigated and maintained a system of emigration from Europe that was praised beyond their own community and, by increasing their numbers with migrants from Europe, they guaranteed an influx of skills and new blood that militated against stagnation. During the Presidency of Brigham Young some forty thousand people left Britain as Mormon converts bound for the gathering in Utah. It was perhaps most appropriate, therefore, that he was succeeded by a President who had been born in England, John Taylor, and that he, in turn, was followed in that office by the missionary who made the greatest impact of all in Britain, Wilford Woodruff.

CHAPTER 2.

THE FOUNDING OF THE BRITISH MISSION : THE APOSTOLIC MISSIONS.

The revelation to the Prophet Joseph to send the gospel to the British Isles was similar to the revelation to Peter in former days to take the gospel beyond the society in which it was first established. As the Apostle Paul became the herald of the gospel message to foreign lands in that day, so Elder Heber C. Kimball was the chosen minister to Britain in our day. The branches of the early Church in Corinth, Ephesus and Thessalonica, had their British counterparts in Preston, Chatburn and Eccleston. ¹.

The docking of an unpretentious sailing ship, the Garrick, in the port of Liverpool on Thursday 20th July 1837, would have been accorded only idle curiosity by any bystander who witnessed the scene. The vessel had completed an uneventful crossing of the Atlantic from New York in just twenty days and neither its cargo nor its complement of passengers would have appeared other than ordinary to an onlooker; indeed the arrival of a vessel on that particular date could hardly have claimed the attention of a public whose mind was dominated by other events - the accession of a seventeen year old monarch and a parliamentary election, these occurring within a month of each other. Among the passengers as they disembarked was one group of seven men, no doubt grateful to be on land again, but apparently lacking any ostensible mark of distinction, although one of the seven

1. James R. Moss, "The British Legacy in the Church" in Ensign : December 1979, p. 27.

had led an act of Sabbath worship on board the Garrick when the vessel was still four days from its destination. To this group, however, had been entrusted a labour without precedent, the results of which were to have a profound significance for religious observance, both in their homeland, America, and in the country chosen for their mission, Britain. Thus without ceremony, without "purse or scrip", ². the seven, more accustomed to the life of the frontier farmer than to that of urban England, carried a new doctrine, a new gospel, to the British Isles; the initial overseas mission of the Mormon Church had started.

That the teachings of the Church should be taken to Britain was inevitable, since many of the early converts in America had retained close links with family and friends in the British Isles and, not unnaturally, wished to share their newly acquired faith with such people. Specifically, the conversion of a number of people in Canada by Parley P. Pratt had resulted in the request that their families, whom they had only recently left, should receive the tenets of the Mormon faith. Church records, however, lead to the conclusion that a mission to Britain had been contemplated for some time before it became a reality. One of the earliest of such references relates to Joseph Smith visiting a small branch of the Church in Pontiac, Michigan, in 1834, where he informed the

2. Orson F. Whitney, Life of Heber C. Kimball :
Salt Lake City. 1888, p. 119.

Stevenson family with whom he was staying, that "there are thousands of good people in England and those old countries who are waiting for the fulness of the gospel, and it will not be long before they will flock to Zion." 3. Elder Heber C. Kimball, who led the initial mission to Britain, anticipated Parley P. Pratt's mission to Canada where the latter would find people receptive to his teachings and "from the things growing out of this mission, shall the fulness of the gospel spread into England, and cause a great work to be done in that land." 4. William Smith is reputed to have received a vision of the Apostles of the Church labouring in England; 5. apparently he prophesied that "a great work would be done by them in the old countries, and God was already beginning to work in the hearts of the people." Whatever the authenticity or value of such records, the Mormon Church believes that its British converts had been spiritually prepared to receive the new teachings and consequently had been set apart to respond to the doctrine of the gathering, which was to become a fundamental article of the Mormon faith.

There were, however, far more prosaic factors which influenced the timing of the first mission, for it coincided with a period of particular turmoil within the Church in America, which manifested

3. James R. Moss, *Op. cit.*: p. 30.

4. Parley P. Pratt. Autobiography : Salt Lake City, 1964 edition, p. 130.

5. J. Smith and H.C. Smith, History of the Church : Iowa, 1902, Volume 2, p.392. (History of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints).

itself not merely in dissatisfaction with and criticism of the leadership of the Church but in apostasy. The brief career of the Kirtland Safety Society Bank Company which survived for only twenty seven days,⁶ the illegality of the banking operation, since Ohio refused to issue a banking charter, the consequent writ against Joseph Smith, who was fined a thousand dollars, the maximum fine which could be imposed, the financial and material losses incurred by the many members whose funds had supported the venture, and the resultant rumours of malpractice drained the Church and specifically its Prophet of credibility. Even among the Apostles - those standing closest to Smith in the Church's hierarchy - there was dissent and, at least, the threat of rebellion, one of the twelve, Parley P. Pratt, writing to Smith "I shall be under the painful necessity of preferring charges against you for extortion, covetousness and taking advantage of your brother, by an undue religious influence."⁷ Pratt's charge divided the High Council of the Church when they were asked to excommunicate any Saint who brought a suit against a fellow member. Among the most influential who apostatized were Cowdery and the various members of the Whitmer family who had been so close to Joseph Smith in the early days of the Church, and who had claimed that they had witnessed the golden plates,

6. See Chapter 1, "The American Origins", p. 32.

7. Quoted by Fawn Brodie, *Op. cit.*: p. 203.
Letter from Parley P. Pratt to Joseph Smith.

their testimonies to this day being reproduced on the introductory pages of the Book of Mormon; although they left the Church, they never retracted their testimony.

To the Church members, constantly experiencing the abuse and vilification of non-Mormons, the threat of physical assault and the consequent insecurity, the failure of the banking venture, for whatever reasons, became an issue unlike any that had preceded it; many were forced to question their allegiance to a leader who now appeared fallible. In mitigation it must be stated that Joseph Smith's failure was certainly not unique, since many other banking ventures met with the same fate. In May 1837 alone, over eight hundred banks were forced to suspend operations, this being the inevitable result of the precipitous and unsound land speculation of the previous two years. Smith's position was, however, peculiar, since he was the acknowledged leader of a religious body and any miscalculation or error for which he must accept responsibility invariably brought discredit upon him personally and upon the Church, while inflicting economic hardship upon his followers, many of whom had entrusted their total possessions to the banking venture.

The revelation received by Joseph Smith and relating to the Church's first overseas mission coincided with this period of significant disaffection within the Church and attack from

without. It is possible that Smith sensed an advantage could be gained at that moment by dispatching those nearest to him on various missions which would be demanding of their energy and where their sense of grievance might diminish. Parley P. Pratt who, as has been noted, was one of those who voiced criticism, actually requested that he might undertake a mission to the eastern seaboard where he hoped to clear his blood of acrimony by concentrating his effort upon preaching to those outside the Church. Whether the majority of missions undertaken at this time emanated from a calculated act of self-preservation on Smith's part or whether, as has been equally argued, they owed their existence to an act of true enlightenment, directed by revelation, is a matter for speculation. What can be clearly affirmed, however, is that the missions were announced at a time when the Church and its Prophet were under threat and their joint survival, to a large extent, depended upon the outcome of the missionary labours, a fact that could not have eluded those who undertook them.

A responsibility for promulgating the Church's teachings beyond their initial and immediate area of influence had been given to the Apostles when they were ordained in that office in February 1835.

You have had your duty presented in revelation. You have been ordained to the Holy Priesthood. You have received it from those who had their power and authority from an angel. You are to preach the Gospel to every nation. 8.

8. Joseph Smith, Doctrines and Covenants : No, 18, Church of Christ of Latter - Day Saints, 1845.

Consequent upon this instruction, Heber C. Kimball, one of the original twelve, had undertaken a mission to the eastern states. He had been absent from Kirtland during the disastrous banking venture and the land speculation that preceded it, but had returned in its aftermath. It was to him that Joseph Smith entrusted the leadership of the British Mission, Kimball recording his Prophet's approach to him.

On Sunday, the 4th day of June, the Prophet Joseph came to me while I was seated in the front stand, above the Deacon's table on the Melchizadek side of the Temple in Kirtland and whispering to me said, "Brother Heber, the spirit of the Lord has whispered to me, 'Let my servant Heber go to England and proclaim my Gospel and open the door of salvation to that nation'." In a few minutes afterwards Hyrum Smith came to me and opened the door of the pulpit and also informed me of my appointment . 9.

The initial reaction, as Kimball later recalled, was of self-doubt, an entirely understandable response given the magnitude of the directive. He requested that his close companion, Brigham Young, might accompany him to alleviate the pressure under which he would labour and to share the unprecedented responsibility. Upon Smith's rejection of this, however, a trait characteristic of much of early Mormon endeavour was apparently displayed - resolution.

The idea of being appointed to such an important office and mission was almost more than I could bear up under.

9. Heber C. Kimball, Journal and Record of Heber C. Kimball.: C. H. O., Msd. 627.

I felt my weakness and unworthiness and was nearly ready to sink under the task which was placed upon me, and I could not help proclaiming : O Lord I am a man of stammering tongue and altogether unfit for such a work. How can I go to preach in that land, which is so famed throughout Christendom for learning, knowledge and piety, and the nursery of religion, and to a people whose intelligence is proverbial.

However, all these considerations did not deter me from the path of duty; neither did I confer with flesh and blood; but the moment I understood the will of my heavenly father, I felt a determination to go at all hazards, believing that he would support me by his Almighty power; and endow me with every qualification I needed. And although my family was dear to me, and I should have to leave them almost destitute; yet I felt that the cause of truth - the Gospel of Christ, outweighed every other consideration, and I felt willing to leave them, believing that their wants would be provided for by that God, who "taketh care of sparrows" and who "feedeth the young ravens when they cry." 10.

Thus on 13th June, 1837, Heber C. Kimball, accompanied by Elders Orson Hyde, and Willard Richards and Priest Joseph Fielding, left his family and undertook the first stage of a memorable journey from Kirtland to New York, where, as had been arranged, they met three fellow but less experienced colleagues, John Goodson, Isaac Russell and John Snyder. At New York they embarked on the Garrick and so reached Liverpool in July 1837. Only seven weeks elapsed between Kimball being approached at the Temple in Kirtland and the seven disembarking at Liverpool; the speed with which Smith's directive was implemented implies much about Church discipline and organization plus, of course, the faith of those who received the instruction.

10. Heber C. Kimball, Ibid.

Having procured lodgings in Union Street, Kimball, Hyde and Richards sought acquaintanceship with the city where, according to Kimball, "wealth and luxury abound, side by side with penury and want".¹¹ His initial reaction was to the obvious social distinctions that greeted him, distinctions greater than any he had witnessed in America. He recorded that he "met the rich attired in the most costly dresses, and the next minute was saluted with the cries of the poor with scarce covering sufficient to screen them from the weather."¹² The Mormon process of identifying with and sharing the lot of the poor had commenced; Kimball's sensitivity had been affirmed and his sympathy was evident.

On Saturday 22nd July, two days after their arrival in Liverpool, the seven missionaries left that city, taking the coach to Preston, where they were greeted by an Election Day banner which proclaimed "Truth will Prevail",¹³ an inscription which, with hindsight, they translated into prophecy and which has subsequently taken its place in Mormon folk-lore. Preston had been chosen as their destination since the Revd. James Fielding, the brother of Joseph Fielding resided there, being minister of the Vauxhall Chapel, an Independent establishment. Mr. Fielding had originally been of the Methodist persuasion but left the movement to proclaim himself an Independent. He

11. Orson F. Whitney, *Op. cit.* : p. 119.

12. Heber C. Kimball, Journal and Record of Heber C. Kimball.

13. Heber C. Kimball, *Ibid.*

welcomed his missionary brother who stayed with him, the rest of the party taking lodgings in St. Wilfred Street.

The hand of Heber C. Kimball recorded the experience of the first evening in Preston and those of the following day when Mormonism was first preached in Britain.

Brother felding went to his brothers Revren Mister felding desired to see sum of us that night Elder Hide godson and my self went to see him and his brothers in law both ministers they seam to be qite friendly return to our logging the next morning went to hear mister felding preach, praying to the Lord to open the way for us to preach the Lord moved on his hart to open his dores for us to preach with out asking him for it afen he got threw he gave out a pointment for one of the Later day Elders of the Later to preach 3 in the afte noon this he did of his own acord in answer to our prairs. 14.

Kimball accepted the invitation and he and Hyde addressed the congregation from the pulpit in the afternoon while in the evening Goodson preached and Joseph Fielding bore testimony.

The Revd. James Fielding offered his chapel to his brother for the following Wednesday on which occasion Orson Hyde preached. This, however, was the final invitation extended by Mr. Fielding who was already fearful of losing a substantial part of his congregation to those who promulgated

14. Heber C. Kimball, Ibid.

Of the papers of Heber C. Kimball, certain remain in the original, others are in transcript; in the latter any linguistic errors have been amended.

the new doctrines, this being a reaction to which Joseph Fielding was immediately sensitive.

My brother again offered his Chapel on Wednesday but did not seem to receive our Testimony himself and before Wednesday he began to wish he had not been so liberal, as he did not fall in with us he did not wish his People should, and he could see it had taken hold of them. 15.

The anticipated rift occurred; the Vauxhall Chapel was closed to the missionaries who, for the next few weeks, had to rely upon invitations to preach in private households until they were able to secure the use of the Temperance Hall in Preston, which they first used on 27th August 1837.

The missionaries had, however, achieved their initial objective; they had gained access to a congregation, certain of whom had responded to their teachings and were prepared to offer their houses for acts of worship. Further, among those who had listened to the missionaries, there were some who were sufficiently moved to offer themselves for baptism into the new faith, the first of these being George D. Watt who thus gained renown as the first convert in Britain to be baptized a Mormon. This ceremony took place in the River Ribble on 30th July when, according to Kimball "between seven and nine thousand persons assembled on the banks of the river to witness" the event. 16.

15. Joseph Fielding, Journals : C.H.O., Msd. 1567.

16. Quoted by Orson F. Whitney, Op. cit.: p. 135.

Allowing for a liberal exaggeration in this estimate, an occasion of some significance had, never-the-less, occurred; many were to follow the example of George Watt and offer themselves for baptism, so many, in fact, that Mr. Fielding who had formerly opposed the practice, actually engaged a Baptist minister to conduct a service of baptism for the Vauxhall Chapel congregation, but, apparently only one person came forward. 17. Having originally acted out of brotherly compassion and interest, he was unable to accept that his congregation might change their allegiance and affection and was unable to reconcile himself to his brother's convictions and actions. A letter he addressed to Joseph Fielding one year after these events illustrated the depth of his feelings.

With regard to your robbing me of my flock I abide by what I said before - we must proceed upon an acknowledged principle. Now I do not believe at all that you were sent of God to rend my little church to pieces. Were I to speak as "plain" as you do I should boldly declare that it was not God but Satan as an angel of light sent you here. However, I do seriously declare that that is my sincere belief. I feel truly thankful to find that you give me credit for the sincerity of my prayers for you. I feel as if I could lay down my life to reclaim you. Now if God sent you as you say to preach these new covenant doctrines

17. Manuscript History of the British Mission, entry under "Diary of the British Mission", 31st July 1837.

and without respect of persons, I cannot see on what grounds you can possibly justify yourself in passing by Liverpool and coming hither first - besides had you opened your mission in Liverpool you might have avoided the charge of working with a poor brother's materials. It would have seemed less of human and more like a work depending ^{alone} on the power of God for its success. 18.

Bereft of the interest and assistance of the Revd. James Fielding, the missionaries, however, maintained the impetus of their first week in Britain. At a Council on 31st July they determined that they should proceed to contact other family acquaintances; thus Goodson and Richards made plans to visit Bedford, while Russell and Snyder were to travel to Alston in Cumberland. Preston, however, was to remain the focal point of Mormon activity.

On 2nd August, the home of Thomas Walmesley, a convert, was visited by Jennetta Richards, the daughter of the Revd. John Richards, the Independent Minister of Walkerfold, a community some fifteen miles north-east of Preston. Her visit coincided with the presence of Kimball at the house. At Kimball's invitation she attended a Mormon service that evening and two days later presented herself for baptism in the Ribble, following which she was confirmed, the first

18. The Revd. James Fielding to Joseph Fielding :
Joseph Fielding Collection, C.H.O., Msd. 1567.

convert to be confirmed in Britain. Upon her return to Walkerfold she requested her father to extend an invitation to Heber C. Kimball for him to visit the village and preach there; this he did on 13th August and also on the following day. Four days later six converts were baptized. The events of Preston some three weeks earlier were now being repeated in rural Lancashire. Mr. Richards informed Kimball that the latter could no longer preach at the Independent Chapel, although, unlike the Revd. James Fielding, Richards manifested no bitterness towards the Mormons, whom he continued to treat with kindness and hospitality.¹⁹ Again private houses were opened to the missionaries and in these their services were subsequently conducted. Jenetta Richards, who had been responsible for bringing the Mormon Church to Walkerfold, however, was to play an increasingly significant role within that Church; she sealed her commitment to her adopted religion on 24th September 1838 when she married one of the original seven missionaries, her namesake, Willard Richards.

Concurrent with Kimball's labours in Lancashire, his fellow missionaries were attempting to extend Mormon influence to two other areas: Alston, in Cumberland, and Bedford. Isaac Russell and John Snyder had journeyed to the former of these areas and, within two months of commencing their work there,

19. Orson F. Whitney, *Op. cit.*: p. 140.

a small branch of the Church was established. Its subsequent history, however, illustrates the precarious nature of the early branches which relied for their substance upon the charisma and strength of the founding missionary. Thus Isaac Russell, who was largely responsible for the founding of the Alston branch of the Church, which dated from 25th September 1837, was also instrumental in its near demise. Russell remained in the Alston community for some time after establishing the branch, returning to Preston the following March and subsequently sailing with Kimball and Hyde on the Garrick, which commenced the westward crossing of the Atlantic on 20th April 1838. Within a year of his return to the American continent, Russell apostatized, establishing a separate church and proclaiming himself its prophet. In his quest for adherents he addressed correspondence to his former congregation in Alston, enticing them to transfer their allegiance and gather with him in America. The defection of Russell and his attempt to gain converts in this way provided a severe test to the confidence and loyalty of the Alston branch, which was never numerically strong; the intervention and support of Willard Richards were necessary to ensure its survival and to re-emphasize the principles of the Mormon faith.

Richards had also undertaken the mission to Bedford, accompanied by Goodson, in July 1837, a labour which illustrates the tactic adopted by the missionaries of pursuing family contacts, in this instance the contact being the Revd. Timothy Matthews,

formerly of the Church of England but now an Independent Minister and the brother-in-law of Joseph Fielding. The initial welcome was again cordial, the use of the chapel was offered and, in addition, the availability of private rooms arranged. However, once the threat to the stability of the minister's congregation was perceived, all assistance was withdrawn and the missionaries were ostracized, although, as elsewhere, such actions were too late to prevent the initial impact of the new teachings and the first converts were offering themselves for baptism. The missionaries were forced to steel themselves against this rejection and to continue their labours in an environment now more hostile and less hospitable; their sense of isolation was increased as may particularly be observed in the record of Joseph Fielding, whose missionary zeal had alienated both his brother and brother-in-law and consequently other members of his immediate family.

This morning I received a letter from my Sister Ann Matthews of Bedford, written in great Grief of heart, because she had understood that I had pronounced an Anathema on my Brother James, showing also that she and her Husband entirely reject our Message, so I am now as a Stranger in my native Land, and almost to my Father's house there is not one that I can look to with Confidence. 20.

20. Joseph Fielding, Journals : C.H.O., Msd. 1567., entry dated 25th September 1837.

The success of the first overseas mission of the Church should not be assessed in terms of the number of baptisms performed or the membership figures achieved during the period of the missionaries' labours; neither should the subsequent defection of Russell and Goodson, the latter of whom returned to America in October 1837 taking with him some two hundred copies of the Book of Mormon and Doctrines and Covenants rather than let them be distributed in Britain, and who, like Russell apostatized, detract from the success; rather it should be evaluated by a consideration of what the missionaries initiated and what they left for their successors and for their converts. When the Garrick sailed from Liverpool in April 1838, conveying Kimball, Hyde and Russell, there had been planted the embryo from which the national system of branches and, later, conferences was to develop. Branches or pockets of support had been established in Lancashire, Yorkshire, Cumberland and Bedfordshire, in all of which locations houses were opened for preaching; the Preston branch, in fact, is the oldest continuous branch of the Church anywhere, outdating all the branches of the Church which currently exist in America. The identification with the working class and the emphasis placed upon the lay status of all office holders encouraged the British converts to assume a responsibility within the branches and was to lead to the emergence of influential future leaders from within the ranks of the converts, for example William Clayton who in October 1838 gave up his occupation to dedicate his time and energy to the role of full-time minister and who was particularly associated with the founding and development

of the Manchester branch of the Church. The strategy of widening Church membership by being recommended by one person to another, frequently a member of the same family, had been proved successful and, of course, offered an expanding chain of influence so that subsequent missionaries and British converts had various contacts to pursue. The potential for recruitment amongst splinter non-conformists was apparent; there was the evidence of converts who had previously been members of the Independent Chapels of the Revd. James Fielding, the Revd. Timothy Matthews and the Revd. John Richards at Walkerfold, but additionally a conspicuous number of former Aitkenites had offered themselves for baptism. 21. The Revd. Robert Aitken, whose stronghold had been the industrial centres of Lancashire, was sufficiently moved by this loss of membership for him to visit Preston to expose Mormonism and to lecture on the fraudulent nature of the Book of Mormon.

In addition to their use of personal contacts and recommendations, the initial missionaries had also forged a relationship with one of the respectable bodies of Victorian England, the Temperance Society. When the Revd. James Fielding closed the doors of the Vauxhall Chapel to his brother and those who laboured with him, the Mormons were fortunate in securing the use of a building known as the Cockpit, owing to its former associations,

21. The Mormon Church recruited former Aitkenites in a number of locations; see for example, Alfred Cordon who was instrumental in founding the Staffordshire Conference.

and then used by the Preston Temperance Society. A temperance reformation had, in fact, occurred in Preston just prior to the missionaries' arrival. For seven shillings per week, plus an additonal two shillings for lighting, the Temperance Hall was rented, and so commenced a significant relationship between the Church and the Temperance Movement which was to benefit the former in many towns and cities in Britain, for, as the chapels were increasingly closed to Mormon preachers, so Temperance Halls became the main centres of Mormon activity. When, in 1840, the Church commenced publication of the Millennial Star, in its first volume it acknowledged the assistance and commented upon the happy coincidence of abstinence within the Church and the aims of the Temperance Movement.

Some years previous the principals of the Temperance Society (originally established in America) were introduced into England and Preston was the first town to receive them. Among the many interesting and valuable items held forth by the temperance people, it was often remarked by them that temperance was the forerunner of the Gospel, which prophecy proved true, for when the fulness of the Gospel came from America to England, it was first preached in Preston, and through the influence of the Temperance Society the Latter-Day Saints procured the use of the Temperance Hall in Preston (a commodious building originally erected for cock-fighting) for their chapel, and commenced meeting there on 3rd September 1837, and continued until they were ejected through the influence of others, the Temperance Society not having it entirely at their control. Similar favors have been received from several other Temperance Societies in England for which the Lord rewards them. 22.

22. Millennial Star: Volume 1, April 1841.

The departure of Kimball, Hyde and Russell, left just two of the original seven in England, Willard Richards and Joseph Fielding, the latter of whom assumed Kimball's initial responsibility of President of the British Mission. Both Richards and Fielding had married in Lancashire during 1838, their new status giving them additional reason to remain within the British Mission. For a little over eighteen months they were the sole American representatives of the Mormon Church in Britain, yet, aided by British converts, the mission field was extended especially within the vicinity of Manchester and also among the pottery towns of Staffordshire, where the Burslem branch was established in September 1839, largely as a result of the labours of Richards, William Clayton and a Lancashire convert, John Moon. The mission was progressing; the work commenced in 1837 was continuing, its momentum maintained. This was the legacy of the original mission: the field had been opened, the base had been provided for the more illustrious missionaries of 1840, the remarkable achievements of whom would not have occurred without the application and inspiration of those who constituted the first mission. The energy and inventiveness of the apostolic missionaries who assembled in England during the spring of 1840 were to develop the foundation provided by the seven who preceded them: "the stage was well set for possibly one of the most dramatically successful thrusts of Christian church activity since the first century." 23.

23. Robert Mullen, The Mormons : London, 1967, p. 57.

Even before the eminent missionaries who comprised the second British mission landed, their mission was marked as peculiar and special. Its origins lay in a revelation given to Joseph Smith in Far West, Missouri, on 8th July 1838, in reply to the Prophet's request for guidance concerning the twelve Apostles, who stood closest to him in the Mormon hierarchy.

Verily, thus saith the Lord, let a conference be held immediately, let the Twelve be organized, and let men be appointed to supply the place of those who falter. Let my servant Thomas remain for a season in the Land of Zion, to publish my word. Let the residue continue to preach from that hour, and if they will do this in all lowliness of heart, in meekness and humility and long-suffering, I, the Lord, give unto them a promise that I will provide for their families, and an effectual door shall be opened for them, from henceforth; and next spring let them depart and go over the great waters, and there promulgate my Gospel, the fulness thereof, and bear record of my name. Let them take leave of my Saints in the city of Far West, on the 26th day of April next, on the building spot of my house, saith the Lord. 24.

Although the revelation was precise, events during the months following its being received made implementation both impracticable and dangerous, for hostilities in Missouri and the overt hatred of Governor Boggs of that state, forced the Mormons to evacuate Far West, leaving it in the hands of their self-proclaimed enemies. To the members of the Twelve, however, to whom the revelation had been directed, there existed no conflict between the safe and practicable and their duty to respond to revelation which they

believed to be divinely inspired. Their response was expressed by Brigham Young.

Many of the Authorities considered, in our present persecuted and scattered condition, the Lord would not require the Twelve to fulfil his words and the letter, and, under our present circumstances, he would take the will for the deed; but I felt differently and so did those of the Quorum who were with me. I asked them, individually, what their feelings were upon the subject. They all expressed their desires to fulfil the revelation. I told them that the Lord God had spoken, and it was our duty to obey and leave the event in his hands and he would protect us. 25.

On 18th April, therefore, Brigham Young accompanied by Orson Pratt, Wilford Woodruff, John Taylor, G. A. Smith and Alpheus Culter left Quincy, Illinois, where they were camped, to journey to Far West. at which location, joined by Heber C. Kimball and John Page, they fulfilled the revelation on the morning of 26th April, on the site where they had hoped to build the Temple. They were joined in their ceremony by nineteen fellow Mormons who had not so far evacuated Missouri; together they returned to Illinois and prepared for the mission.

Their determination to fulfil the revelation was witness both to their faith and their courage; it was also indicative of their collective response to a challenge or dilemma, a characteristic which was to prove of great value during their mission.

25. Brigham Young, Manuscript History : editor Elden Jay Watson, printed privately by Smith Secretarial Services, Salt Lake City, (undated). Entry for 8th July 1838.

The poignancy of departing from their families was vividly recorded by a number of the missionaries: Young, ill himself, told of leaving his wife "sick with a babe only ten days old and all my children sick and unable to wait upon each other ;" ²⁶. Woodruff, suffering from "fever and ague", blessed his "sick wife and left her almost without food or the necessities of life." "She suffered my departure with fortitude that becomes a saint, realizing the responsibilities of her companion" ²⁷. By the time they arrived in England, therefore, the missionaries had already undergone a series of personal trials which had adequately tested their fitness to undertake the labours that awaited them.

The Apostles crossed the Atlantic in two parties, docking in Liverpool on 11th January and 6th April respectively. By the latter date, therefore, there were assembled in England eight of the Apostles, Brigham Young, Orson Pratt, Parley Pratt, Heber Kimball, John Taylor, Wilford Woodruff, George Smith and Willard Richards who, of course, had arrived with the original mission and had subsequently remained in his adopted land; three other Apostles had remained in America and there was currently one vacancy.

26. Brigham Young, Ibid : entry for 14th September 1839.

27. Orson F. Whitney, Op. cit. : pp.108/109.

Taylor and Woodruff plus Elder Theodore Turley had constituted the earlier of the two parties. At a council meeting in Preston on 17th January in conjunction with the established missionaries,²⁸ a strategy was resolved whereby the missionaries were allocated specific areas for their labours: Taylor and Joseph Fielding were to labour in Liverpool, Hiram Clarke was to work with the Manchester brethren, while Woodruff and Turley were to travel to the pottery towns of Staffordshire and there consider the possibility of continuing to Birmingham and making inroads in that city where Turley's parents resided.

During the early stages of the development of the British Mission certain branches owed their strength and well-being to the energy and guidance of individual Saints, either American missionaries or British converts. This was certainly the case in two major areas of Mormon activity, Manchester and the Potteries, the former responding to the leadership of William Clayton, the latter to that of Alfred Cordon. En route to the Potteries, Woodruff and Turley visited Manchester where they found a membership of one hundred and sixty four and were called upon to administer to the sick among the Saints. The social and economic conditions which they observed in this city confirmed them in their belief that disaster was to strike throughout the world, that Babylon,

28. Wilford Woodruff, Diaries : C.H.O., Msd. 1352, entry for 17th January 1840.

so long corrupt, would fall.

The Distress of nations is at the door in fulfillment of the vow of God, while confusion is through America great trouble is manifest throughout England and beginning in all nations. There is trouble this morning in the town of Manchester about 3000 souls is flung out of employ at the factories because of the pressure of times and the lowering of wages and they are standing in every corner of the streets in groups counseling what to do, and there are at the present time (I have been informed) thousands of souls almost in a state of utter starvation. 29.

The missionaries arrived in Burslem, Staffordshire, on 21st January and were met by Cordon who presided over a branch of sixty six members. Cordon had been brought up within the Church of England but, during his late teenage years, his membership had lapsed. The death of his first daughter when he was twenty two had rekindled his need for spiritual solace, whereupon he had joined the Aitkenite Church which was then active in the Potteries. For some months he undertook a preaching role for his adopted church before he heard a Mormon Preacher, Mary Powell from Manchester; in the face of much opposition from his fellow Aitkenites, he accepted the new teachings and was baptized a Saint. 30. Although the major role in the expansion of the Potteries branches of the Church has generally been ascribed to the influence of Woodruff, the development of the branches following their founding in 1839 and during the post - Woodruff period must be firmly

29. Wilford Woodruff, Diaries: entry for 20th January 1841.

30. Alfred Cordon, Journals: C.H.O., Msd. 1831.

attributed to Cordon.

On his first visit to the Potteries, Woodruff laboured for just six weeks, during which period his remarkable energy was evident; within the first week of his mission he had preached in Burslem, Hanley, Stoke, Lane End and Newcastle. He was an opportunist who could sense an advantage, as his Journal record for 10th February indicates.

On this day Queen Victoria of England was married to Prince Albert. As many were on this day celebrating the marriage of the Queen I thought it no more than just and right that I should honor the King of Heaven by advocating his cause and preaching the gospel of his Son Jesus Christ so I walked out into the Market place accompanied by Elder Alfred Cordon and Deacon William Bradbury and Brother George Simpsons and we began to sing praises unto God and call upon his name and a congregation flocked around us and we preached the gospel unto them and I bore testimony unto them of the great works that God had set his hand to accomplish. 30.

By the end of February, Woodruff had consolidated the position of the Mormon Church in the Potteries and had extended the area of his mission to include Stone, where Widow Welch of Mill Lane and Widow Gilberts of Church Street offered their houses for preaching. He evidently felt optimistic about the advance of the Church as he observed "a good field open for our labour. Many believing and it appeared as though we had a door open to bring into the Church many in that part

31. Wilford Woodruff, Diaries : entry for 10th February 1841.

of the vineyard." ³². At this point, already achieving a very tangible return for his labours, he determined to leave the Potteries, to travel to Herefordshire, an area previously unvisited by Mormon preachers. His decision, arguably the most important to be taken by a member of the British Mission, has always been regarded by the Church as an example of a member responding to divine revelation; certainly that was always Woodruff's contention. On Sunday 1st March, Woodruff's thirty-third birthday, he twice preached in the City Hall at Hanley. Whilst conducting the evening service he was visited by the "spirit of the Lord" and informed that the current service was the last over which he would preside in that area for some time. ³³. This he communicated to his congregation. On the following morning he prayed for guidance and was directed to leave the Potteries and travel to the south "for the Lord had a great work for me to perform there, as many souls were waiting for His word." On 3rd March he, therefore, took the coach to Wolverhampton and there spent the night prior to travelling through south Staffordshire and Worcestershire before arriving at his destination, Hill Farm, Castle Froome, ³⁴.Ledbury, Herefordshire, the home of Mr. John Benbow.

32. Ibid: entry for 17th February 1841.

33. Ibid: entry for 1st March 1841.

34. Castle Froome is occasionally written as Castle Frome.

This traditional narrative, with its emphasis upon revelation, is securely entrenched within Mormon history, yet there is certainly an important connection between the Potteries and Castle Froome, which has not been accorded its place in the story.³⁵ On the second day of his stay in the Potteries, Woodruff visited a member who kept a provision store, fronting Hanley Market Place, William Benbow, at whose residence the missionary was subsequently to preach on a number of occasions. There must have been a strong likelihood that William mentioned his brother in Herefordshire and he may have suggested that he might be a sympathetic receiver of the Mormon teachings. Certainly, in view of the many examples of Mormon missionaries pursuing the family contact, a visit at some stage to John Benbow, would appear to have been inevitable. Additionally in his Journal, Woodruff mentions that William Benbow accompanied him on his journey to Wolverhampton, and, presumably, Herefordshire. The involvement of William Benbow is important for it demystifies the folk-lore that surrounds Woodruff's decision to move the area of his labour to Herefordshire, and it presents the missionary as both a practical man and an opportunist; it does not, however, deny the possibility of revelation.

John Benbow and his wife Jane, a childless couple, owned some three hundred acres which they farmed. More importantly

35. Traditionally, no mention is made of the presence of William Benbow and the possibility of his influencing Woodruff. The one exception to this is James B. Allen and Malcolm R. Thorp, "The Mission of the Twelve to England, 1840-41" in Brigham Young University Studies : Volume 15, No.4, Summer 1975.

they belonged to a sect which took the title, United Brethren, and could claim approximately six hundred members in Herefordshire, Worcestershire and Gloucestershire. Its founding figure was Thomas Kington who had been expelled from the Wesleyan Methodist Church which, according to the testimony of one of the United Brethren, "objected to being disturbed by a call to repentance, which was the battle cry of this notable man." 36. The sect had a number of houses licensed for preaching, including Benbow's farm, and many of these were made available to Woodruff. Within two days of his arrival, Woodruff had baptized six of the Brethren, including John and Jane Benbow; Kington was baptized two weeks later on 21st March 1840. Upon his being accepted as a Saint, Kington displayed within the Mormon Church the energy he had previously devoted to the United Brethren; within three months he was presiding over twelve branches of the Church. In the first five weeks of his labours, Woodruff baptized over one hundred and fifty converts, forty eight of whom were lay preachers. Eventually nearly the entire membership of the United Brethren entered the Mormon Church, many of these assuming responsibility within the local branches and later exercising their qualities of leadership in Illinois and Utah.

One young member of the United Brethren recorded his impression of Woodruff visiting his uncle's house, where the

36. Job Smith, "The United Brethren" in Improvement Era : July 1910, Volume 13, No. 9, p. 819.

young man lived, on 18th April 1840.

The usual exercises to open the meeting being performed, Elder Kington introduced his companion as an elder from America who had come to introduce to us the fulness of the gospel. An anxious audience then listened with open ears and anxious hearts for two hours while the apostle explained the first principles of the gospel together with the manner in which it had been revealed through the ministering of angels to one Joseph Smith, through whom a church had been organized with Apostles, elders, priests and teachers, with all the gifts, healings and manifestations enjoyed by the ancient church of Jesus Christ in Jerusalem, and other places in the days of the apostles whom Christ himself had ordained.

At the conclusion of his discourse he gave opportunity for the audience to question him, which they did for almost another two hours consumed in asking and answering. He closed by calling for such as felt satisfied in their minds to become candidates for baptism. The congregation having confidence in their former leader, Elder Kington who readily gave his testimony to the truth of what had been spoken, many of them gave their names for baptism and a convenient body of water being situated at the bottom of the garden, quite a number gave in their names and quickly got ready. Quite a group soon assembled at the water's edge and baptism commenced.

I also asked him if I was old enough to be baptized, which he answered in the affirmative, and while shaking hands with him I asked him if there were any of the apostles now in England, to which he replied, "You have hold of one of their hands". Subsequently the remainder of the members of the United Brethren were baptized. Elder Woodruff and Elder Kington on the morrow passed into Gloucestershire to where other branches of the Brethren existed, and where large numbers embraced the gospel, my father being one of the number. In each of these villages branches of the church were organized with presiding elders and other officers ordained and set apart for special duty. My father was ordained an elder and counselled to leave off manual labor and set out to preach the gospel in other parts of the country, which he straightway did. 37.

The conversion of the United Brethren and the extending of the mission's influence throughout Herefordshire and neighbouring counties created a field of labour which, in terms of membership and potential, was greater than anything previously achieved by the Mormon Church; in Woodruff's words "this has opened the largest field for labor and increase of numbers of any door that has been opened in the same length of time since the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter - Day Saints has been established." 38. On 11th April he left Herefordshire temporarily to attend a conference convened at Preston; he did so in the knowledge that much had been achieved but that the labour ahead required more than just his efforts, a further two hundred persons being prepared for the act of baptism.

Theodore Turley, meanwhile, had been experiencing equally remarkable, if less successful, happenings. He had left the Potteries on 29th January and had journeyed to Birmingham where he hoped to convert various members of his family. In this he met with little success, neither could he gain any solace from meeting the Revd. J. Lilley whom he had known twenty years previously, before his emigration to America. He returned to the Potteries just a few days prior to Woodruff taking his leave of the area. In Staffordshire, as elsewhere, opposition to the

38. Wilford Woodruff, Diaries : entry for 16th April 1840.

missionaries began to mount once their achievements became apparent. A Methodist Minister, John Jones, was particularly vociferous in the Potteries, disrupting meetings and orchestrating other forms of protest. He became aware of a discrepancy over a debt allegedly owed by Turley when he emigrated some fifteen years earlier. Jones was instrumental in resurrecting the issue and at his instigation Turley was arrested and imprisoned in Stafford Goal where he remained from late March until his release on 9th May, ³⁹. the case being dropped without trial.

His sojourn in Stafford Prison provided a new arena for preaching and one which Turley duly accepted. In a letter to Willard Richards he wrote of publicly preaching in the debtors' ward and of the reception accorded to this act.

One is solemnly converted to obey the Gospel the first opportunity he has. Several others are much taken up with the doctrines that I advanced, and one in particular, a sensible man, who has been much perplexed with the doctrines of the day, so much so that his mind is almost poisoned against the Bible; he is diligently searching the Scriptures. I have lent him Elder Pratt's work the "Voice of Warning", he wants to buy one. There is strife as to who shall have it. I could well sell some of them, if I had them and they would be scattered to different parts of the land soon. Dear Brother it is a very difficult place to attempt to preach the pure principles of the Gospel in, for the mind of every individual is so busily engaged in

39. Manuscript History of the British Mission : No exact date of the arrest is given. The first reference to the incident is dated 23rd March 1840.

contriving means to elude justice, and at all intervals they bring out of their evil hearts the abominations therein contained, and in order to smother reflection they have resource to gambling and drunkenness. ^{40.}

What particularly troubled Turley was his inability to attend the Council of the Twelve, held on the day of his above correspondence, at the Temperance Hall, Preston. This was the first occasion when all eight Apostles set apart for the British Mission were collectively assembled, the second party, which included Brigham Young, having arrived at Liverpool during the previous week. Thirty-three branches of the Church were represented and Woodruff announced the total membership of the British Mission to be 1671. Among the decisions taken was that to publish a monthly periodical, the Millennial Star, ^{41.} Parley P. Pratt to assume the editorship of this venture. Pratt and John Taylor were also commissioned to select and publish a Book of Hymns. The other major decision to be taken related to the allocation of responsibilities among the Apostles: Heber C. Kimball was to visit the branches which he had founded during his first mission; Orson Pratt was to labour in Scotland; John Taylor's base was to be Liverpool; Parley P. Pratt was allocated Manchester where the Millennial Star was to be published;

40. Manuscript History of the British Mission : entry under "Diary of the British Mission." Letter from Theodore Turley to Willard Richards, 14th April 1840.

41. The Millennial Star was originally published as a monthly journal; from June 1845 it was published fortnightly and became a weekly publication in April 1852.

George A. Smith's area was the Potteries; Wilford Woodruff was to continue his labour in Herefordshire and neighbouring counties where, because of the number of potential converts, he was to be joined by Willard Richards and Brigham Young, the latter of whom assumed responsibility for the British Mission, succeeding Joseph Fielding as President. The organization determined, there now commenced the most sustained period of missionary labour so far undertaken by the Mormon Church.

By May the printing of the Millennial Star was under way, Parley Pratt having secured premises in Oldham Road, Manchester, with sufficient room for an office, a book store, a bindery and for a family to live, for a rent of twenty pounds per year. The first edition of the journal ran to two and a half thousand copies. Three thousand copies of the hymn book were also published. Later in the month the decision to print three thousand copies of the Book of Mormon was taken, the money for all these ventures being raised from donations and especially from the generosity of John Benbow and Thomas Kington who contributed £250 and £100 respectively. 42.

The ensuing months witnessed the missionaries' endeavours and their optimism as they met with success in many regions. Diaries for this period indicate the rigorous experiences of the Apostles and their fellow missionaries, daily moving from village to village, preaching wherever there was opportunity and frequently having to confront opponents, certain of whom were not prepared

42. Brigham Young, Manuscript History : entry for 20th May 1840.

to rely upon debate alone but offered physical abuse. Thus Brigham Young preached in a different village or town on each day between 6th and 20th May, always walking to the venue, sometimes alone, occasionally accompanied by Richards and Woodruff. The physical and psychological demands made upon the missionaries by such an itinerary must have been considerable; the will-power, fortitude and courage that had been prerequisites of their American experiences, now proved invaluable in rural England. The records of endeavour are, however, punctuated by expressions of satisfaction as the unity of the developing Church is evidenced.

May 18. Elders Woodruff, Richards and myself went to brother Kington's in Dymock, and baptized several. As it had been customary for the United Brethren, over whom Elder Kington had presided for several years, to have a feast on that day, Elder Kington prepared a feast, and at 4 p.m. about 100 Saints congregated. I addressed them, much assisted by the Spirit of God, and asked the Lord to bless the food prepared for us, when we sat down and partook of the bounties presented on the occasion. Elder Richards made some appropriate remarks, and I followed him; after which we confirmed three, and ordained one Elder and six Priests. Three were baptized after meeting, making twenty baptized that day. ⁴³.

In the Staffordshire Potteries George A. Smith and Alfred Cordon extended their mission field in the face of much opposition. On 14th May, Cordon wrote that "the gift of healing the sick has been, in several instances, made manifest in a powerful manner ...
...and the Kingdom of God was rolling forth in majesty and power." ⁴⁴.

43. Ibid : entry for 18th May 1840.

44. Millennial Star: Volume 1, June 1840.

Among their converts was William Barratt who shortly afterwards emigrated to South Australia, becoming the first person to take the teachings of the Mormon Church to that country. ⁴⁵. A British convert, Joseph White, reported from Audlem in Cheshire that after initial disappointment he was meeting with success; when he first commenced his mission he was forced to "lodge in fields, but now the Lord is blessing us with the blessings of heaven and of earth. There is a very large field for the gospel in this region of the country." ⁴⁶. Heber C. Kimball on a visit to Cheltenham found "a very attentive congregation" ⁴⁷. and in that town preached in a house "full to overflowing". In Cheltenham, as in a growing number of other towns, a British member of the Church had accepted responsibility and was actively attempting to extend Mormon influence throughout the neighbouring districts; membership figures indicate that Elder Glover met with some success in this quest. Theodore Turley, now released from prison, had made little impact upon his immediate family but was persevering with his labour. He wrote of preaching in the streets and on one Sunday in June he had been invited to "fill the appointment of a Methodist local preacher."

45. Manuscript History of the British Mission: entry under "Diary of the British Mission", 11th July 1840.

46. Ibid. Letter from Joseph White to Parley P. Pratt, 9th November 1840.

47. Millennial Star: Volume 1, January 1841.

This he did, preaching for two hours in a private house, after which the Methodist preacher publicly proclaimed his intention to be baptized.⁴⁸ Elsewhere within the Birmingham district, a British Saint, John Needham, was active. Although he "found it a cross to go in strange towns and visit from house to house for a place to preach in"⁴⁹ he succeeded in opening houses for worship in Oldbury, Dudley, Hill Top and Darlaston.

Whilst industrial Lancashire and the Midlands responded to the Mormon missionaries, the capital largely rejected their gospel; in London they experienced their greatest disappointment. In August 1840, Kimball, Woodruff and Smith journeyed to that city to be met by apathy from the populace and obstruction from officials. Established ministers refused them their pulpits and when they attempted to preach in the open at the Smithfield, they were forced to abandon this activity by the enforcement of a by-law forbidding street preaching within the limits of the city. Only when they moved outside the city boundaries were they able to proclaim publicly their teachings. Woodruff who had achieved so much success elsewhere was compelled to acknowledge that "in the great Babylon of modern times"⁵⁰ they had experienced more

48. Manuscript History of the British Mission : entry under "Diary of the British Mission". Letter from Theodore Turley to G. A. Smith, 8th June 1840.

49. Ibid. Letter from John Needham to G. A. Smith, 17th September 1840.

50. Wilford Woodruff, Diaries : entry for 19th August 1840.

difficulty in their attempt to establish the Church than in any other city or town in which they had laboured. Two weeks elapsed before they performed their first baptism, a Mr. Corner of 52 Ironmonger Row in the parish of St. Luke,⁵¹ offering himself for this service which was performed in the public baths. The missionaries, however, did take advantage of the opportunity of listening to certain of the capital's established preachers, including the Revd. Robert Aitken, who according to Woodruff, "presented some of the most sublime truths I ever heard from a sectarian priest,"⁵². Indeed an empathy does appear to have existed between Aitken and the Apostles, whom he received kindly when they met; the antagonism of three years earlier in Preston had apparently subsided. London, however, remained largely apathetic and even Brigham Young's diary for the two weeks in December when he joined his colleagues there, is more a record of historic places visited than converts made.⁵³. By the turn of the year, they had secured the use of premises, Barrett's Academy, 57 Kings Square, Goswell Road, and were attracting congregations of about fifty but when this is measured against their achievements elsewhere it remains a paucity; the missionary labours in the capital city were,

51. In certain references the first London convert is named as Conners.

52. Matthias Cowley, Op. cit.: p. 123.

53. Brigham Young, Manuscript History : entry for 11th December 1840.

without doubt, the greatest disappointment of the mission. The establishing of a branch there and the consequent labours of its members were responsibilities that passed from the Apostles to a young missionary who arrived in England towards the end of 1840, Lorenzo Snow. Under his leadership some progress was made and the base for future development established, yet his initial reaction to assuming responsibility for the city aptly summarized both the lack of achievement and the challenge: "I think you exhibited much wisdom in leaving the seat of Satan," 54.

In February 1841 Kimball received a directive from Joseph Smith requesting the immediate return to America of the Apostles, the prospect of a deterioration in the relationship of America and Britain over the imprisonment of a British officer, McCloud, by the State of New York, being given as reason for this decision. The sense of order and the meticulous planning which had characterized the mission were now evident in the leave-taking; the branches which the missionaries had raised and in which they had laboured were revisited, the faith of their members being reaffirmed. Conferences were convened at which the local officials of the Church were sustained in their respective positions by vote of the membership and at which the condition of the various branches

54. Quoted by James B. Allen and Malcolm R. Thorp, "The Mission of the Twelve to England, 1840-41", in Brigham Young University Studies : Volume 15, No. 4, Summer 1975, p.511. Letter from Lorenzo Snow to G. A. Smith.

could be appraised. The numbers attending these conferences or represented at them testified to the achievements of the Apostles: the Staffordshire Conference, held on 28th March was held in "a place which would contain 800, and it was crowded; but there was perfect order and much good feeling manifested during the day." 55. Woodruff concluded that "there was prospect of a continued increase in the Potteries." At the General Conference of the Church, held in the Carpenters' Hall, Manchester, on 6th and 7th April a total membership of 5,814 56. was represented, three quarters of this number having been recruited during the preceding twelve months. Some gatherings, however, were less formally conducted; at Liverpool the venue for a tea-party, given in honour of the departing missionaries and attended by two hundred Saints, was the Music Hall. 57.

On 21st April 1840, seven of the eight Apostles who had laboured together sailed from Liverpool to New York on the Rochester, in the company of a further hundred and twenty Saints who, accepting the doctrine of the gathering, were emigrating. The Apostle who remained was Parley P. Pratt who, having recrossed the Atlantic earlier in the year to collect his wife and family and bring them to Britain, established himself in his adopted country and resumed responsibility for publishing

55. Wilford Woodruff, Diaries : entry for 28th March 1841.

56. Brigham Young, Manuscript History : entry for 6th April 1841.

57. Ibid : entry for 15th April.

the Millennial Star . Equally important to the subsequent growth of the Church were the many British Saints who had shown a desire and ability to accept responsibility and who now remained to exercise leadership over the various branches of the Church, working in fellowship with the less well known American missionaries who had been introduced to this mission field.

Among the many characteristics of the Apostles, the ability to inspire others to assume leadership, to imbue converts with the desire that they too should accept a missionary role, must figure highly. The Apostles created a structured Church of branches which, in turn, were grouped into conferences; they also developed their converts so that these branches and conferences could be efficiently administered and led. Their leadership by example injected an enthusiasm and respect which many British converts inherited. Saints such as Kington and Cordon had previously exercised leadership within other sects and brought this experience with them to the Mormon Church but others awoke to a realization of what they could offer for the first time.

During the period of the Apostles' mission, the programme for the emigration of British Saints was inaugurated, 58. this responding to the doctrine of the gathering, a major tenet of Mormon teaching. Under Theodore Turley's presidency, some

58. Details of the Mormon emigration policy and programme are presented in Chapter 8, "Emigration and Settlement".

two hundred Saints emigrated on the North America which sailed on 7th August 1840, the first of many vessels to be chartered by the Church. So successful was the organization of the emigration programme that many non-Mormons elected to cross the Atlantic on Mormon vessels rather than sail on the available commercial crossings and by 1877, when John Taylor succeeded Brigham Young as the third President of the Church, approximately forty-five thousand converts had been transported. Among the earliest of emigrants was John Benbow who left Herefordshire in a party of fifty Saints, forty of whom had had the cost of their emigration paid for by Benbow, they being too poor to raise the necessary money. Benbow, whose generosity and hospitality had been of such assistance to Woodruff when he first laboured among the United Brethren, gave practical example of the principle of consecration in sharing his wealth with those whom he had previously employed, enabling them to realize their ambition to gather in Zion, and sharing with them in the experience. Benbow, himself, settled initially on prairie land some six miles from Nauvoo where, according to Woodruff, he created a "Garden of Eden", surrounding his farm with ditches and thorn hedges so that "the farm resembled very much the farms of old England". 59.

59. Matthias Cowley, Op.cit.: p.159.

As the Apostles prepared to leave the field of their labours, they inevitably reflected upon their experiences and achievements and upon the distinction between the condition of the Church upon their arrival and its position and strength just a little over twelve months later. Woodruff recognized this when he confided "truly the Lord hath blessed us in a manner not looked for. It hath truly been a miracle what God hath wrought by our hands in this land since we have been here and I am astonished when I look at it." 60. Brigham Young's response was more specific and detailed and serves as testimony to the success of the mission.

It was with a heart full of thanksgiving and gratitude to God, my Heavenly Father, that I reflected upon his dealing with me and my brethren of the Twelve during the past year of my life, which was spent in England. It truly seemed a miracle to look upon the contrast between our landing and departing from Liverpool. We landed in the Spring of 1840, as strangers to a strange land and penniless, but through the mercy of God we have gained many friends, established churches in almost every town and city in the Kingdom of Great Britain, baptized between seven and eight thousand, printed five thousand Books of Mormon, three thousand Hymn Books, two thousand five hundred volumes of the Millennial Star, and fifty thousand tracts, and emigrated to Zion one thousand souls, established a permanent shipping agency which will be a great blessing to the Saints, and left here sown in the hearts of many thousands the seeds of eternal truths, which will bring forth fruit to the honor and glory of God, and yet we have lacked nothing to eat, drink, or wear; in all these things I acknowledge the hand of God. 61.

60. Wilford Woodruff, Diaries : entry for 16th April 1841.

61. Brigham Young, Manuscript History : entry for 20th April 1841.

The apostolic missions did more than lay a foundation for subsequent Mormon activity in Britain; they provided a training ground for those who would lead the Church on both sides of the Atlantic; they provided a preparation for those who would guide the Church during the difficult period following the death of Joseph Smith. Through their experiences the Apostles developed a unity that was to be tested by the events in America upon their return. It is significant that the Apostles who served with the British Mission remained loyal to one another and to the Church following Smith's death, while members of this early quorum who did not undertake the mission, all defected from the main body of the Church. Additionally, when the test of leadership occurred and Brigham Young emerged as the Church's second Prophet, he was loyally supported by the several hundred British Saints whose emigration he had assisted and who subsequently sustained him in office in Nauvoo, and, when that city was evacuated and the trek westward commenced, the British Saints, who had served an apprenticeship by crossing the Atlantic and undertaking the arduous journey to Illinois, were foremost in supporting his leadership and travelled with him to the desert. The apostolic missions commenced and developed the Church in Britain; in turn those early British converts sustained the Church in America.

CHAPTER 3.

THE MISSION DEVELOPS.

Many of the Priesthood and Saints here have of late become thoroughly imbued with the spirit of reformation, and have manifested their desire to awaken from their lethargy, partake of the spirit of the times and renew their diligence before the Lord and his servants, that they may obtain more of that spirit which, under every circumstance, is calculated to comfort and bless them, and cheer them in that path that will lead to honour and exaltation in the Kingdom of Heaven. I am sure that you will be glad to know that men who have been in the Church over twenty years have gone forth and renewed their covenants, manifesting their desire to be still connected with that Work which, though despised by the many, has brought to them so many choice blessings, and which promises to them many more, inasmuch as they will continue faithful. ¹.

Those who undertook the apostolic missions of 1837 and 1840 are rightly celebrated in any chronicle of the Mormon Church; accounts of their fortitude and perseverance, their trials and successes, fuse fact and legend, guaranteeing the founding fathers of the British Mission, whose labours ensured the development of the Church upon two continents, a position of eminence in any history of the Saints. Brigham Young, Wilford Woodruff, Parley P. Pratt, John Taylor and their peers and colleagues created in Britain a Church which can today boast branches whose continuous labour and service is greater than that of any branch in the land of the Church's origin; they also inspired

1. Millennial Star : Volume 25, 31st January 1863.

- other generations of missionaries, both American born and British, into whose care the future of the Church was subsequently entrusted. Alfred Cordon, Thomas Day, John Needham or Job Smith may have lacked the charisma and reputation of their apostolic forbears, the traditions of the Church may not have accorded to them the accolades which it bestowed upon the more eminent missionaries, but theirs was the task of developing the Mormon Church in Britain, of building upon the inspiration and successes of 1837 and 1840, of maintaining and extending the impetus which they inherited.

By the end of 1842, when the second of the apostolic missions may reasonably be considered to have ended, consequent upon the departure of the majority of the eminent missionaries, there were in Britain approximately 8,500 Saints, five times the number the Apostles had found upon their landing two years earlier. 5,000 copies of the Book of Mormon had been distributed, 3,000 hymn books existed, 50,000 tracts had been passed from Saint to Saint and into the hands of many "gentiles", whilst over 2,500 volumes of the Millennial Star had been printed. ² The organization for which the Church became famed was already evident, its sophisticated arrangement of branches and conferences was formed and operating, converts were accepting the responsibility of office within the sect; the Mormon Church was poised to commence a period of remarkable development.

2. P.A.M. Taylor, Op. cit. : p. 20.

Throughout the 1840s there was a continual increase in the membership of the British Mission. Initially there had been the impact of the second apostolic mission after which membership stabilized for three years, at a figure a little in excess of 8,000; in the middle years of the decade there was a steady development, an increase of 3,000 being noted in 1845 and slightly smaller increases in the two succeeding years; the really dramatic change, however, was reserved for the final three years. In both 1848 and 1849 an increase of approximately 7,000 new members occurred, whilst in 1850 membership exceeded 30,000 for the first time. The following year membership peaked at just under 33,000, a figure that could not be repeated in the British Mission until 1961, one hundred and ten years later. Membership figures for the British Mission, however, present only a partial representation of the development of the Church, for with these statistics must be associated those for Mormon emigration during the period; from the commencement of the official emigration programme to the Religious Census of 1851 nearly ten thousand British converts took ship for America, responding to the doctrine of the gathering. This figure for emigrating Saints if added to that of Church membership would boost the latter by approximately a third and indicate that by 1851 missionaries had converted well over 40,000 Saints who remained loyal to the Church. In reality the total number of converts would far exceed this figure - by the end of 1851, 51,897 individuals had been baptized into the Church, of whom 8,000 have to be accounted for by death, apostasy or excommunication.

The Church was not afraid to invoke excommunication and did so quite rigorously, believing that the employment of this ultimate sanction ensured discipline and loyalty, both of which were necessary if the Church was to survive the challenges and persecution of the period. 3.

Whilst explanation of the fluctuation in Church membership must be tentative, owing to the complexity of the influences upon prospective converts, the pattern of development and growth of the British Mission and the state and stability of the Church in America and, by consequence, in Britain would appear to correlate. The stabilization of membership in the three years immediately following the second apostolic mission coincided with a period of uncertainty in the Church's fortunes in America. It is true that Nauvoo developed in size and reputation but conversely this had excited the enmity of many "gentiles" in Illinois. 1843 witnessed the revelation concerning polygamy with its associated criticism and unease; the following year the Church lost its founder and first Prophet and suffered from the crisis of succession which was finally relieved with the sustaining in office of Brigham Young. During the first year of Young's leadership, Wilford Woodruff returned to

3. Throughout the 1840s and 1850s excommunication figures for the various conferences were extremely high; for example in 1850, the Birmingham Conference excommunicated 156 members whilst Staffordshire's figure was 71.

England to assume the Presidency of the British Mission, which enjoyed three years of consolidation and development. The spectacular increase in Church membership at the end of the decade followed the exodus from Nauvoo and the founding of the initial settlement in the valley of the Great Salt Lake. Within two years the Church had established nineteen settlements in the desert to the west of the Rocky Mountains; it had also increased the membership of its British Mission by 14,000.

During the first two decades of its activity in Britain there would appear to have been a relationship between the major events in the Church's history and the membership of its British Mission. A Church, however, that taught as one of its principal tenets that its adherents should assemble in Zion and organized a successful and efficient emigration programme must inevitably denude its mission branches of members and, therefore, the rationale of relating membership and important landmarks cannot be extended indefinitely and must take account of this factor.

The variations in membership figures were, in fact, related to and affected by a number of factors of which significant events in the Church's history were but one. Amongst other variables would be the readiness of prospective members to accept the sect's teachings, the preparedness of the potential congregation by earlier, apparently unconnected, experiences, the social and economic conditions that might influence or pressure people to respond to a certain action that offered to improve their lot,

and the influence of individual missionaries of the Church in conveying and personifying the sect's doctrine. The calibre of the missionaries and subsequently the officers of the Church, its conferences and its branches, was, of all influences, the most important. Of the Apostles who undertook the two initial missions, the most successful and, seemingly, the most energetic was Wilford Woodruff; it is more than coincidence that his return for a second mission in 1845 witnessed a significant increase in Church membership and Church activity.

Mormonism offered those who were receptive a spiritual and secular salvation, a course of action which promised to improve the quality of their lives. Passivity was shunned; members were urged to accept office and responsibility and to enter into a covenant with their maker and their fellow Saints, to enjoy the harvest of their collective labour by the banks of the Mississippi or the waters of the Salt Lake Valley. The appeal of the gathering to the impoverished British farm labourer or the dweller in the urban squalor of Victorian England cannot be exaggerated, as witness the correlation between membership and emigration during the 1840s and 1850s (see Figures I and II). Those who entered upon the covenant underwent a pilgrimage as demanding as any in history; there was an ocean to be crossed, deserts, mountains and swamps to be traversed, hostility and persecution to be encountered. For many, responding to the gathering would be the natural manifestation of their faith; for others, the possibility of emigrating and improving the quality of life would have increased the attraction of Church

membership.

Membership of the Mormon Church in England reached its peak for the nineteenth century in 1851, when the Church claimed 32,894 members and baptized in excess of 8,000 converts. On 30th March of that year, there was conducted a census of religious observance in England and Wales, the only occasion on which such an exercise occurred, one of its major conclusions being that "a sadly formidable portion of the English people are habitual neglectors of the public ordinances of religion,"⁴. Whilst the general findings of the census disconcerted both the government and the clergy of the day, the detail of the report provides an invaluable insight into the patterns of worship within the various sects to which the document alludes. Amongst the numerically small sects from whom returns were received was the Mormon Church.

On Census Sunday the Saints held services in 222 separate locations, the majority of which were merely rooms licensed for preaching, although, in the areas of their greatest strength, chapels purchased from various denominations and adapted for Mormon worship provided the accommodation.⁵ 7,500 Saints attended the morning service, 11,500 were listed as worshipping in the afternoon, whilst over 16,500 were present in the evening.

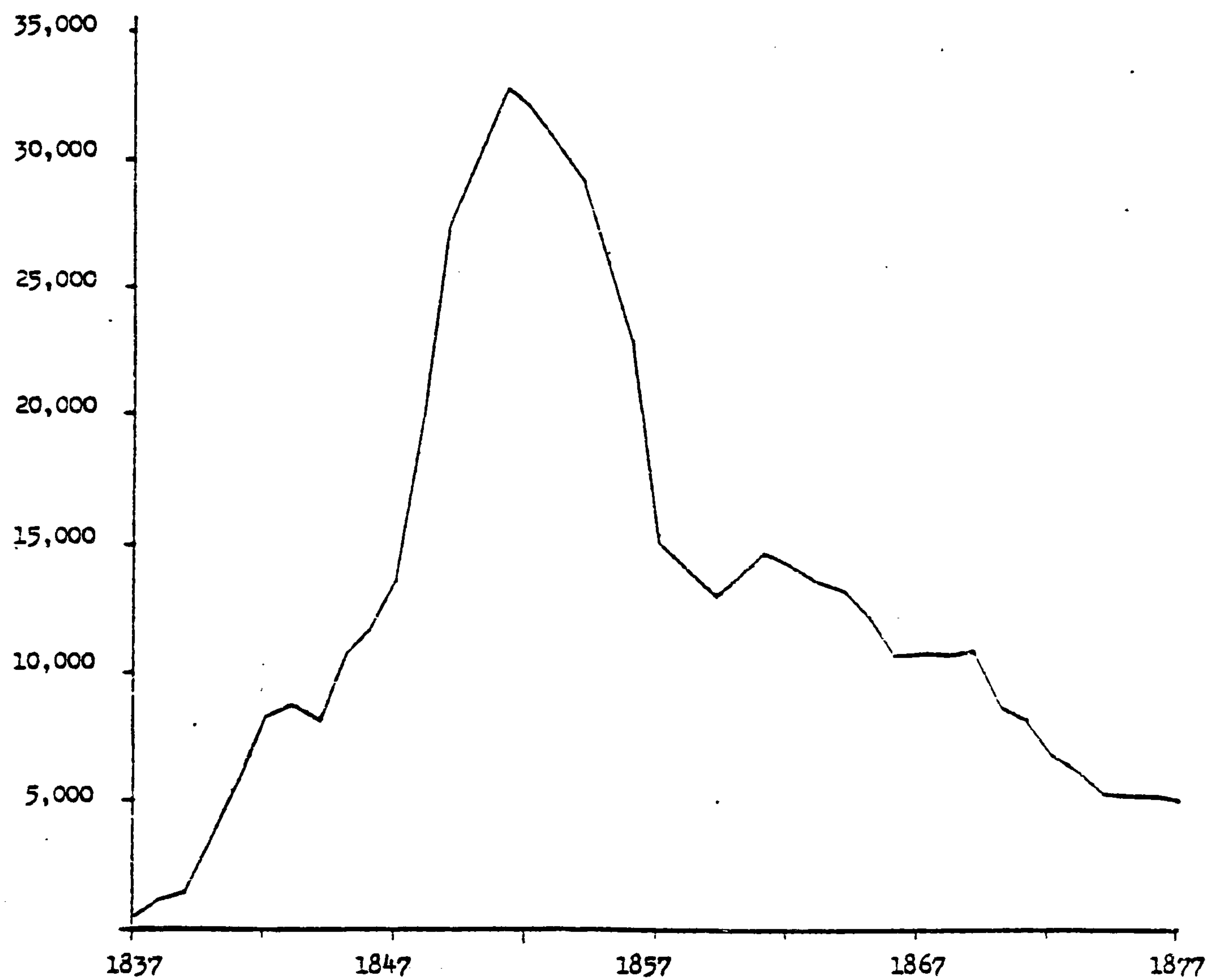
4. Census of Great Britain 1851 : Religious Worship, England and Wales.

5. Birmingham may serve as example, the Saints having purchased the Livery Street Chapel from the Congregationalists in 1845.

Figure I.

Membership of the British Mission : 1837 - 1877. ^{6.}

Members.

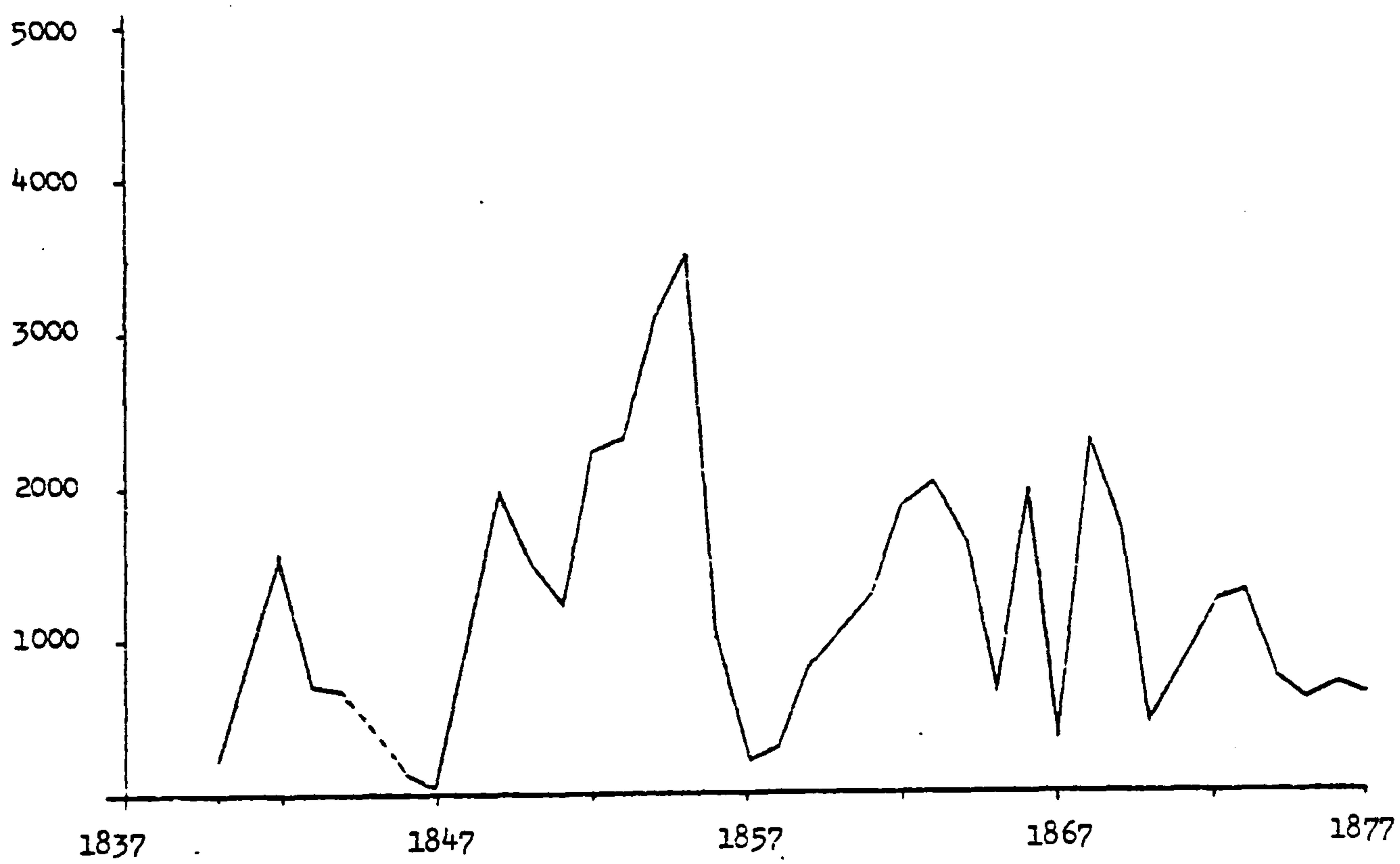


6. Statistics provided by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints.
Administrative Headquarters, 751 Warwick Road, Solihull, Birmingham.

Figure II

British Mormon Emigration : 1840 - 1877. ^{7.}

Numbers emigrating.



7. Adapted from P.A.M. Taylor, Op. cit. : p. 145.

Overall, the average number of Mormons congregated for an act of worship was 38. The Church, however, resides rightly with the minority sects of the report; any significance the census report may have relative to the Mormon cause lies not, therefore, in the size of the Church's congregations but in the distribution pattern of its worshippers compared to the distribution of all observers of religious ordinances on that day.

Whilst allowance must be made for the numerous factors that might have affected the return for that Sunday's attendance at places of religious observance - the inaccuracy of the count, the refusal of some clergy to supply information, the advertising of the occasion and the purpose of the census in advance, the measles epidemic in Nottingham, the incidence of influenza in Leicester and the inability of the census officers to ensure that every congregation of loosely and recently organized sects was included in the exercise, which must surely have been to the detriment of Saints worshipping in private, licensed rooms in rural communities - it has been calculated that not more than 54% of the population aged ten years and over, attended church, chapel or licensed accommodation.⁸ Nationally the attendance for rural areas, where the Church of England was the dominant body, was some 30% greater than that for urban communities in which Nonconformity made the major impression. Amongst the

8. Geoffrey Best, Mid-Victorian Britain 1851 - 75:
St. Albans, 1973, p. 197.

towns and cities where attendance was especially low were London, —
Stoke, Coventry, Birmingham, Manchester and Preston, in which town
Mormonism had first been preached in Britain fourteen years earlier.
The conclusion was inescapable: the centres of industry and the
major manufacturing towns were the communities where the least
percentage of the population attended a place of worship, 9.
a hardly surprising deduction considering the provision of religious
accommodation in the respective areas, for whilst in middle class
communities churches had been erected at a rate proportional to
the increase in population during the preceding decades, in the
inner areas of towns and cities, where the urban population was
concentrated and where growth had in most instances been phenomenal,
the provision of new churches lagged well behind the increase in
population. The distribution map of religious observance for all
denominations, based upon the census returns (Figure III) substantiates
this conclusion and illustrates that "within given bounds churchgoing
is broadly inversely correlated with the size of urban population."¹⁰.

Horace Mann, Barrister-in-Law of Lincoln's Inn and author of the
census report, tabulated the statistics of Mormon attendance for
the three services of 30th March according to the regional division
he employed throughout the document; these are reproduced overleaf.

9. K.S. Inglis, "Patterns of Religious Worship in 1851", in
Journal of Ecclesiastical History : Vol XI, 1960, p. 82.

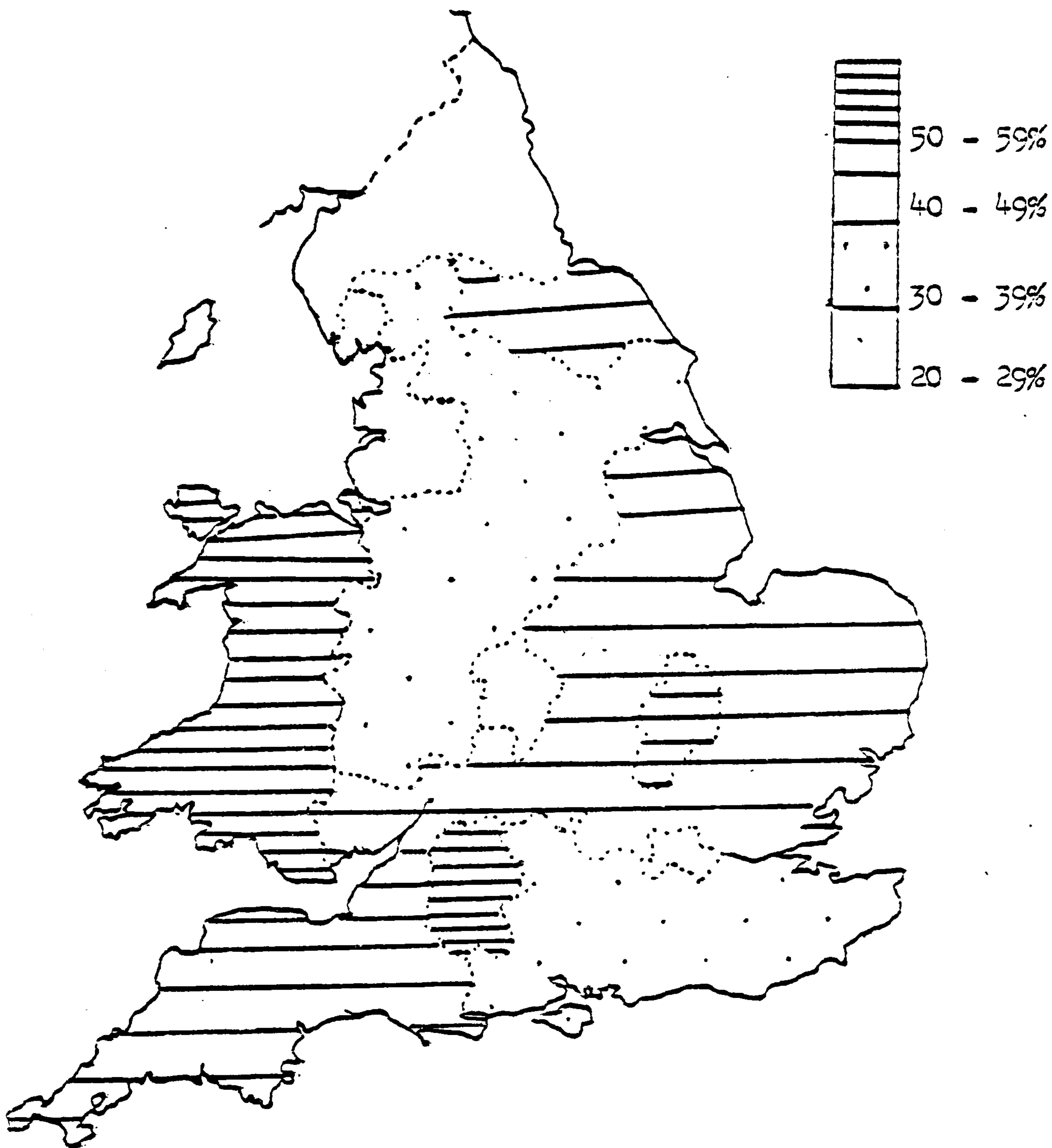
10. W.S.F. Pickering, "The 1851 Religious Census - a useless
experiment? " in The British Journal of Sociology: Volume 18,
1967, p. 389.

Region	Number of Meeting Places.	Sittings i.e. Capacity	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
London	20	2610	846	1080	1685
South East	17	1565	404	506	880
East	18	1351	165	600	635
South West	16	1398	434	760	1253
South Midlands	21	1807	410	730	912
West Midlands	26	4160	1431	1188	2645
North Midlands	30	2592	325	1096	1961
North West	24	2279	950	1710	1969
Yorkshire	11	1780	460	778	1053
North	7	449	162	160	192

The relative importance of four regions is immediately evident: the West Midlands, the North West, London and the North Midlands. The four regions, in fact, accounted for over sixty percent of Mormon worshippers and thus within the various communities that constituted these areas were concentrated the bulk of the British Saints. Yet these four distinct areas had all returned extremely low figures for general church attendance and those cities and towns with the lowest returns of all were to be found within these districts. In summary, the distribution of worshippers within the Mormon Church is contrary to the patterns of distribution for any other religious body or for

Figure III

Church attendance in England and Wales, 1851 Religious Census ^{11.}



11. Adapted from W.S.F. Pickering: Op. cit.

Attendances at religious worship as percentage of total population. Figures are based upon the highest single attendance (morning, afternoon or evening).

the returns as a whole; the Latter-Day Saints, unlike any contending churches, had much of its membership concentrated in areas of industrial activity, growth and the concomitant social and economic deprivation. In the slums of the major centres of industry, the Mormon Church, with its spiritual and secular concern and doctrines, found converts and established its authority.

The preachers, it appears, are far from unsuccessful in their efforts to obtain disciples: the surprising confidence and zeal with which they promulgate their creed, the prominence they give to the exciting topics of the speedy coming of the Saviour and His personal millennial reign - and the attractiveness to many minds of the infallible church relying for its evidence and its guidance upon revelations made perpetually to its rulers - these, with other influences, have combined to give the Mormon movement a position and importance with the working classes, which, perhaps, should draw to it much more than it has yet received of the attention of our public teachers. ¹².

The distribution of the Saints throughout England and the equating of this apportionment with the siting of industry is graphically illustrated on the distribution map (Figure IV) where a topography of the pattern of worship is presented, the basis again being the census returns. John D. Gay ¹³, contended that from the density of Mormon worshippers in certain areas and their paucity elsewhere, may be inferred lines of Mormon

12. Census of Great Britain 1851 : Religious Worship, England and Wales.

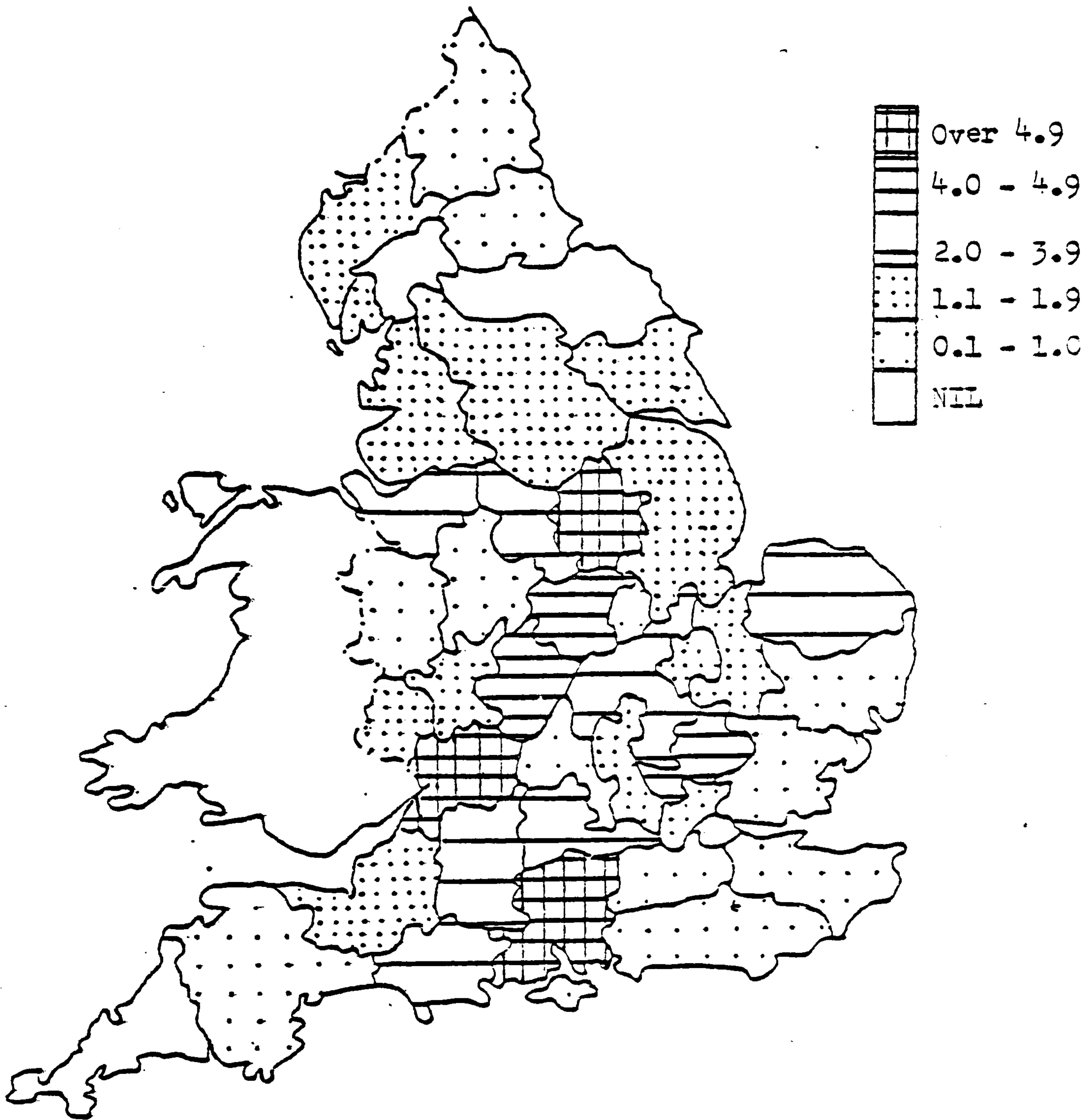
13. John D. Gay, The Geography of Religion in England : London, 1971, p. 194.

penetration emanating from the ports of Liverpool, Bristol and Southampton and extending from their respective hinterlands into the various counties of England, the focal point in all cases being a port associated with the Atlantic passenger trade.

However, of these three ports only Liverpool was used extensively for Mormon emigration and the immigration of the Church's missionaries; two recorded sailings, both during the mission's infancy, left Bristol; there is no evidence of Southampton being used for these purposes and, as the Church was methodical in its record keeping, Southampton must be discounted as a port fulfilling these functions. There do, however, appear to be lines of penetration that demand an alternative explanation. From Liverpool, the port which received the initial Mormon missionaries in 1837, three routes trace the path of the early Saints: one goes north into Cumberland; the second travels eastward towards Yorkshire; the third encompasses the Midlands. These, of course, correspond to the directions taken by the missionaries of 1837 and 1840. The route through the North Midlands extends into the "Black County" and then south via Worcestershire and Herefordshire taking in the region around Bristol. The line of penetration approximates to the missionary labours of Wilford Woodruff and subsequently other missionaries. The third line takes in London, where the early missionaries received their greatest rebuttal, the home counties, first visited in 1837 by Joseph Fielding, and

Figure IV

Geographical distribution of Members of the Mormon Church 14.



14. Adapted from John D. Gay, Op. cit. : p. 194.

Attendance at Mormon services expressed as a percentage of all worshippers on 30th March 1851.

some of the southern counties including Hampshire, the latter of which remains an anomaly, although it is possible that as Saints from continental Europe commenced their emigration they arrived at Southampton en route to Liverpool and the trans-Atlantic crossing. The point, however, is made that the major influence upon the distribution of the Saints throughout the country and the lines of penetration that may be traced, was the original paths taken by the early missionaries. As they laboured so new branches of the Church were opened and a type of ribbon development occurred corresponding to their routes.

The 1851 returns indicate the Midlands as the major sphere of Mormon influence. Whichever of the three daily services is taken, the conclusion is that approximately forty percent of Saints were located in this area, and of this number, nearly half were to be found in the chapels, halls and individual rooms of the West Midlands. Within the region, Birmingham was the centre of the Church's activities: 1,200 attended evening service there, a remarkable figure when compared to the returns for Wolverhampton or Coventry, the nearest large industrial cities, in each of which only 50 Mormon worshippers were to be found on the same evening.

By 1851 most towns in the West Midlands could claim a Mormon place of worship, in most instances a licensed meeting room. All major centres of population were represented in the

census return and attendances at services within the region were double the figure for Mormon services nationally. In areas removed from these concentrated towns, however, meeting places became fewer and distances between them increased in proportion to their removal from the industrial centres. Thus among the outlying branches might be found Uttoxeter or Stratford, both of which returned only 14 worshippers at the evening services.

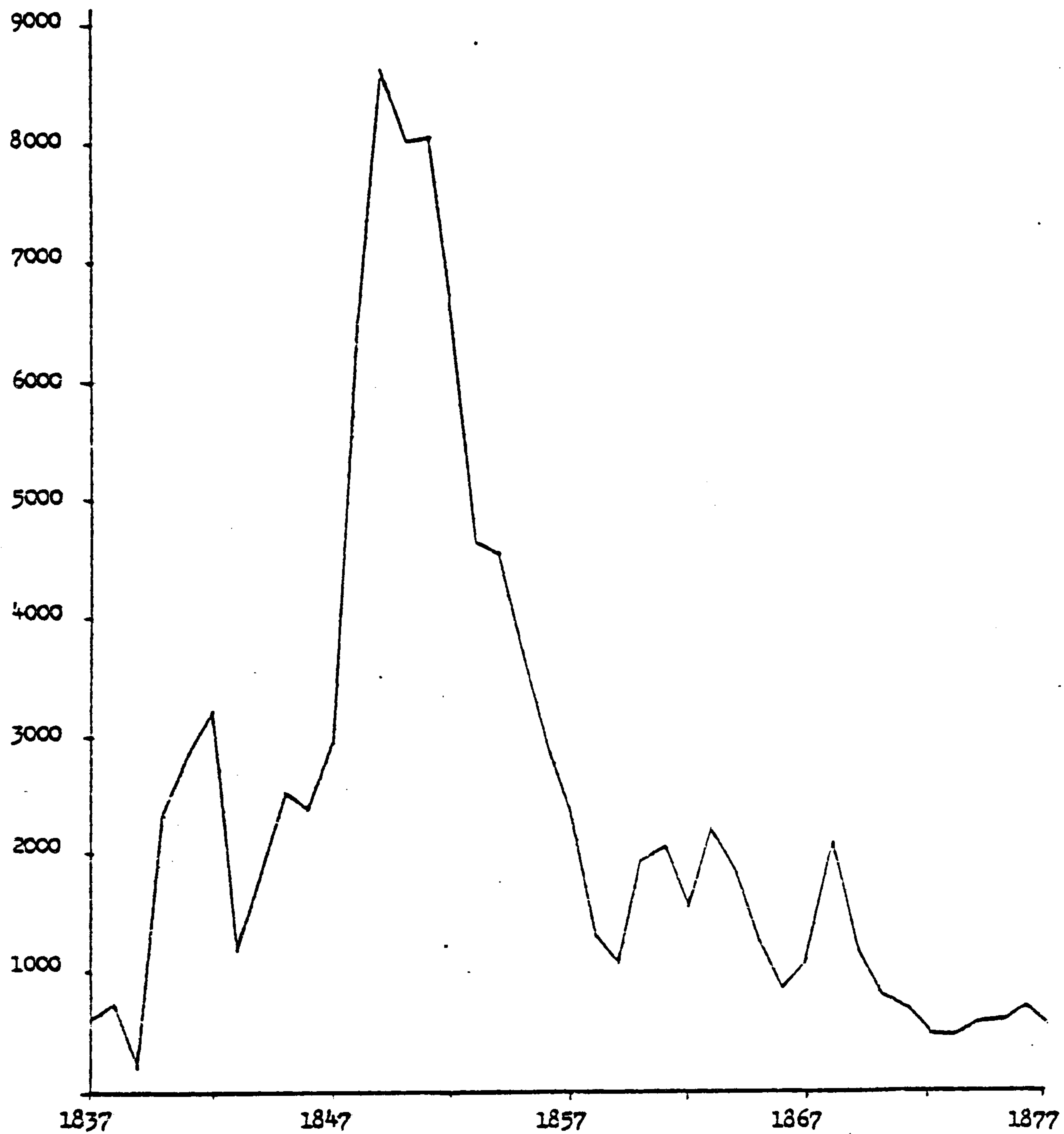
The census report identifies patterns of worship and relates the development of the sect to the labours of the early missionaries; it allows its author to congratulate the Church upon extending its influence into the urban squalor of England and achieving a success that other denominations and sects could not emulate in proportion to their membership; it does not, however, provide the definitive measurement of the strength of Mormon adherents in 1851 since its statistics are at variance with the membership figures provided by the various conferences and published in the Millennial Star. It is impossible to present an accurate relationship between the census returns and the membership statements provided by the Church, since its conferences did not conform to any geographical or readily acknowledged administrative divisions, conferences evolving out of historical accident and numerical convenience. However, some generalized comment is possible: the census returns are uncomplimentary to the Latter-Day Saints.

The returns for Shropshire show an aggregate Church attendance of 164 worshippers of whom 78 attended the evening service, this being the best attended of the three acts of worship. The Millennial Star, however, records that the Shropshire Conference contained 250 members. Likewise for Worcestershire, the aggregate attendance was 386 whilst membership figures exceeded 500. The Froome Hill and Hereford Conference which encompassed much of Gloucestershire, claimed a membership of over 1,500, yet the total attendance for the best attended service, the evening service, in the combined counties of Gloucestershire and Herefordshire was 950. Perhaps the one accurate comparison that can be made is for Birmingham, which was designated a separate conference within the Mormon Church. The half yearly returns published in June 1851 show a total membership of 2,283 of whom 237 had been baptized during the preceeding six months; the census return, however, recorded 1,200 worshippers attending the evening service, a shortfall of approximately 1,000 from the membership figure, a discrepancy which cannot be explained in terms of the vagaries of Mormon religious observance, since conviction was a necessary requirement of membership for the Saints and regular attendance at communal worship was a prerequisite for its retention. The disparity requires other explanation.

Figure V

British Mission Baptisms: 1837 1877 15

Baptisms



15. Statistics provided by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints.

In 1851 the membership of the Birmingham Conference was spread over fifteen branches, many of which were quite small and worshipped in private rooms, probably at a member's house. The census return for the county of Warwickshire, which included the city of Birmingham, listed only five Mormon meeting places. The conclusion is that certain of the smaller branches of the Church were overlooked by the census officials and were therefore excluded from the census statistics. This is substantiated throughout the returns for the West Midlands and by extension throughout the country; in Shropshire, for example, the census report denoted two places of worship whilst the Millennial Star referred to eleven branches, for all of which it provided membership figures. The Census of Religious Worship recommended that the leaders of the established churches and sects should give attention to the methods employed by the preachers of the Mormon Church and recognize the successes they had accomplished with "the labouring myriads of our country, the masses of the working population." By inference the Church was receiving praise from an unexpected source and yet its achievements actually exceeded those which had occasioned this accolade; its membership was greater than that recorded in the census report and its influence was more extensive. Whilst the Church of England and the Nonconformist Churches were largely failing in their attempts to convert the growing population of the developing centres of industry, a minor sect established in Britain but fourteen years, was communicating with meaningful

numbers and establishing an efficient organization of branches and conferences to sustain its labour. Although the 1851 census report embarrassed those churches with a tradition, it acknowledged the achievements of the Latter-Day Saints and accorded them a certain respectability for their work among the underprivileged classes.

The years immediately following the census witnessed the initial decline in the membership statistics of the British Mission, a decrease that was at first marginal but gathered momentum from the middle years of the decade until 1860 when it was halted and a slight increase in membership was recorded. There followed five years of stable membership before the rapid decline throughout the 1870s during which Church membership was declined from nearly 11,000 at the commencement of the decade to a little in excess of 5,000 at the time of Brigham Young's death. Within a period of twenty five years, from a peak membership of nearly 33,000 in 1851, the strength of the Church and its influence in Britain had undergone a severe transformation, membership diminishing sixfold. (See Figure 1). The pace of the Church's growth following the first apostolic mission was matched only by the rapidity of the later decline of its membership.

Membership of the British Mission during its formative and growth years had been influenced by and reflected many factors pertaining to the condition and standing of the Church in America and

Britain; the doubling of membership in the two years following the founding of the first settlement in the valley of the Great Salt Lake is example of this. Explanation of the decline in membership must likewise take account of the political and economic state of the Church in its homeland. The period of the most marked decrease, 1856 to 1859, during which membership halved, corresponded to the year of conflict in Utah when the United States government imposed its nominated governor over the area and occupied Salt Lake City with its forces. The Mormon War claimed few casualties in the Mormon settlements and surrounding regions, yet a continent removed from the actual conflict experienced sufficient reverberations for the effect to be felt. Primarily the uncertainty in Utah diverted the attention of the Church from its missionary programme, the number of preachers undertaking a mission to Britain was limited, and the emigration programme suffered a temporary cessation, which, in turn, influenced the numbers of potential members and consequently the membership of the British conferences. The Mormon emigration programme was, without doubt, an important factor in the recruitment of numbers of converts; its suspension would, in some cases, have deterred the neophyte from offering himself for baptism, as it also created a sense of frustration and concern in the established member who saw the means of his participating in the gathering receding.

Since the Lord in his wisdom has seen fit to allow the Devil to hedge up the way, and for the time being put a stop to emigration to Utah, and the Prophet has counselled the Saints in this land not to emigrate to the States and those already in the States to get out as quickly as possible, many Saints have become over anxious to emigrate to the United States, so as to be ready to go to the Valley, the place appointed for the gathering, when the way shall be opened again. Their desires are uncommonly intense and pressing, and they seem for the first time in their lives, to have awakened to a sense of the importance of gathering with the Saints. ¹⁷.

Political and economic events in America were the catalyst that determined the emphasis to be given to the various activities within the British Mission. The settlement of Nauvoo had indicated the need for an influx of skilled and semi-skilled workers; the British Mission had arranged their emigration, which advertised the Mormon Church and encouraged new members. A decade later, the cultivating of the Salt Lake Valley had excited a renewed interest in emigration and given an impetus to the recruitment of new members. In the latter half of the 1850s the uncertainty in Utah necessitated the halting of emigration since the future of the Church was yet again at risk; simultaneously within the British Mission there was a marked decline in the number of baptisms, the statistical records of the various conferences reflecting this temporary inertia. Thus, during the development of the British Mission and its subsequent decline, there is evidence of a correlation

16. Millennial Star : Volume 20, 8th May 1858.

between the standing of the Church in America and the baptism, membership and emigration trends in Britain; additionally these three aspects of the British Mission inter-relate.

While there were many facets of the Mormon Church that set the sect apart from its contemporaries, the doctrine of the gathering and the consequent programme of emigration gave Mormonism a distinctive appeal to the working classes of Britain. For most denominations and sects the preparation for a spiritual existence was all-consuming; Mormonism, however, addressed itself to the quality of this life which was preparatory to the next. Its exhortation that Saints should do all to gather in Zion ensured that the Church in America would receive the influx of new members and their respective skills that were to guarantee its survival; it also focused the mind of the seeker upon an act both practical and reassuring, it attracted new members who wished to better themselves - the progressive labouring class - and encouraged many to contemplate baptism.

In the midst of the general distress that prevails in this country on account of want of employment, the high price of provision, the oppression, priesthood and iniquity of the land, it is pleasing to the household of faith to contemplate a country reserved by the Almighty as a sure Assylum for the poor and oppressed - a country every way adapted to their wants and conditions - and still more pleasing to think that thousands of the Saints have already made their escape from this country and all its abuses and distress, and that they have found a home, where by persevering industry they may enjoy all the blessings of liberty, peace and plenty. 17.

17. Millennial Star: Volume 2, August 1841.

The efficiency of the emigration programme and the prospect that America was reputed to offer must have been a major inducement to many enquirers. As the American settlements became truly established, however, the need for an immigrant force diminished, the Church was achieving an acceptable level of self-sufficiency. In 1848 it had offered inducements to all mechanics who were prepared to undertake the journey to America; 18. two years later it had advertized "We want a company of Woollen Manufacturers to come with machinery, and take our wool from the sheep and convert it into best clothes and the wool is ready. We want a company of Cotton Manufacturers, who will convert cotton into cloth and calico, etc. and we will raise the cotton before machinery can be ready. We want a company of Potters, we need them, the clay is ready and the dishes wanted." 19. By the second half of the 1850s, however, the initial needs of a pioneering and developing settlement had been met and the requirement of a considerable additional workforce no longer existed. The Church's economy could be satisfied by those who had already settled in Utah and, in fact, much of its missionary effort was concentrated upon establishing other settlements west of the Rocky Mountains and transferring population from the immediate vicinity of the Great Salt Lake to these new frontiers of the Church. The British immigrant who had been instrumental in bringing an industrial revolution to Nauvoo and transforming the desert of Utah was no

18. Millennial Star : Volume 10, 1st February 1848.

19. Millennial Star : Volume 12, 1st May 1850.

longer at a premium for the skills he possessed. As the emigration programme was more strictly controlled and the inducements were withdrawn, so the membership of the British Mission declined proportionately.

The decline in membership was inexorable, only two minor and temporary revivals in the fortune of the Mission momentarily halting the movement: the first in 1860 coinciding with the resolving of the Mormon War and Utah's return to stability; the second, a decade later, was at the time of the joining of the Union Pacific railtrack and that of the Central Pacific at Ogden and the construction of the branch line to Salt Lake City, which enabled the immigrant to travel from his port of disembarkation on the east coast to Utah by railway within a matter of days. Emigration statistics (Figure II) were far more erratic than those for membership, yet they indicate increased emigration for the two periods of development in Utah cited above, when emigration figures exceeded two thousand per year. Emigration programmes were susceptible to influences external to the Church, which could render the Church's plans powerless. The difficulty in chartering vessels during the American Civil War is the most obvious example of an external event affecting Church organization and the enthusiasm of prospective emigrants; such political intrusions upon the emigration programme help to explain the irregular pattern of the emigration statistics. However, allowance having been made for

unanticipated influences, there remains sufficient conformity between emigration statistics and membership figures for the influence of the former upon the recruitment of members and, therefore, upon the membership of the Mission to be evident.

Many of the converts who were inspired by the teaching of the early missionaries had previously moved from sect to sect in their search for a satisfying religious doctrine; there is evidence that a number had also embraced radical politics in their personal quest.²⁰ The early missionaries had arrived to find a reservoir of potential members actually awaiting the message they purveyed. Among the initial converts were many such people who also comprised the bulk of the early emigration companies. The enthusiastic, the energetic, the young responded to the call to gather and left behind the less sure, the hesitant, the elderly. Over a period of time the British conferences were denuded of the more robust of their members and suffered a consequent decline. Some branches witnessed the emigration of nearly all members; in certain rural communities the emigration of one or two families would decimate the branch, removing the majority of members and its leadership. The emigration programme sustained the Church in America and was an incentive to recruitment

20. See Chapter 6, "Midland Mormons". Large numbers of converts had been "seekers" for some considerable time prior to being baptized into the Mormon Church and had held membership of various non-conformist denominations and other sects.

but inevitably ravaged the very branches of the Church which it had been instrumental in developing. By the 1850s many of the early converts had responded to the call to gather; included in this number was the majority of the British Saints who had assumed leading roles within the British Mission and had directed and sustained it during the years following the apostolic missions. Devoid of their outstanding leaders, reduced by the success of the emigration programme, the branches and conferences entered a decline; new members were not as ready to come forward as had been the case during the 1840s ; the Church was less certain of those who remained and who had for years neglected to join the gathering, maintaining a nominal membership as distinct from assuming an active role. By 1858 the Church felt it necessary to advise its Elders.

Studiously avoid, unless in some special cases and in some peculiar circumstances, and then only by the direct and unmistakable promptings of the Spirit of the Lord, using persuasion to induce any of the people to emigrate. We feel convinced that in some instances Elders have permitted themselves to be hurried beyond the bounds of wisdom in this matter by their zeal for the salvation of the people. If a man or woman who has embraced the Gospel, and enjoys a nominal membership in the Church of Christ, does not feel it his or her duty to gather to the place which God has appointed, after they have been properly warned and taught the principles of the Gospel, no persuasion should be used to induce them to do so, but they should be suffered to remain in Babylon until they themselves become satisfied that it is their duty to gather; for if they go under the influence of another's arguments and persuasions, they rarely have the strength necessary to enable them to stand and endure the trials with which they may have to contend on their way to and after they arrive in Zion, and they become dissatisfied, and regret that they ever left Babylon and soon take measures to return to it again. ²¹.

21. Millennial Star: Volume 26, 23rd January 1858

The success of the Mormon Church which had enriched its settlements in America and had strengthened the Church in that continent had inevitably weakened its mission in Britain. The Mormon Church was not a sect for the passive and the indecisive; it made demands of its members, especially its imposition of tithing, and it administered its regulations and constitution thoroughly, to the consternation of many who were either unable to sustain membership and voluntarily withdrew or were excommunicated by the Church. Additionally by the 1850s and 1860s, many of the members who had been converted during the infancy of the Mission were aged; death also took its toll of Saints. Natural processes, therefore, and the enforced discipline of the Church, added to its own inability or unwillingness to sustain the impetus of earlier years, collectively ensured the numerical decline in membership. If the incentives to acquire membership had diminished the pressures against joining the Church had increased. Mormonism had arrived in Britain during the period of transatlantic revivalism. Mormon missionaries initially appeared to differ little from the other evangelists who crossed the Atlantic. By degrees, however, the potential of the new missionaries was realized and opposition, at first individual, became more co-ordinated. Propaganda denouncing Mormonism was circulated, lectures were given and apparently well received, publications purporting to reveal the iniquity of the

21. Millennial Star: Volume 26, 23rd January 1858.

Saints were imported from America, pamphlets warning parishioners of the perils of sympathizing with the aims of this new sect were written and published by the clergy of the Established Church. Mormon missionaries and members were physically and verbally abused, landlords withdrew tenancies from known members of the Church, converts were dismissed from their employment. The revelation concerning plural marriage and the practising of polygamy invited the condemnation of all non-Mormons; Church leaders and members were vilified and ridiculed for associating with a sect whose practice was so alien to non-members. Although polygamy was never practised in Britain and, in fact, was adhered to by only a minority in America, it was viewed by all who opposed the Church as a damning indictment. No response on the role of women in Utah society, the responsibilities bestowed upon them and the opportunities afforded to them, could counter the hostile press to which the Church was subjected on this question. It is impossible to calculate the effect polygamy had upon both members and potential members of the British Mission; it achieved for the Church a notoriety which no other revelation or action could rival; it segregated Mormons from the followers of all other denominations or sects, and doubtless deterred many from enquiring what the Church could offer them.

Throughout the nineteenth century, the records of baptismal services undertaken annually within the British Mission (Figure V) mirror membership returns (Figure 1) and thus also correlate to the condition of the Church on both sides of the Atlantic. They

are evidence of the selfless labour undertaken by American and British missionaries during the century, this being of as great significance during the years of adversity as in the period of spectacular growth. The baptisms performed during the final decades of the century may appear a small return when compared to those of the 1840s, yet in the on-going narrative of the Church, they provide the tradition upon which Mormons of this century were able to build. By them the Church was sustained, its identity and culture further developed. The renaissance of the mid-twentieth century owes much to the years of perseverance in the face of unrelenting decline.

The Church was fortunate in its infancy that it commanded members with exceptional qualities; its major resource was always its personnel, their conviction, zeal and loyalty its argument. The imagination and strength of the Apostles and their colleagues gave the impetus to the British Mission; the development of the Mission and its sustenance through years of obvious achievement and the later numerical decline relied upon a different leadership yet one that retained a dedication to the ideals of the sect. Alfred Cordon, a potter, brought up in the Church of England, provided the leadership of the Staffordshire Conference during the early 1840s before emigrating in 1844; four years later he returned to Britain on a mission which set him apart to labour in Leamington and Rugby. 22. Thomas Day worked in the carpet industry in

22. Alfred Cordon, Journals.

Kidderminster, joined the Arminian Methodists and assumed the role of local preacher; he was baptised into the Mormon Church in 1842 and ordained a priest in the same year, labouring in Stratford, Leamington and Coventry where his initiative created a branch of the Church. He emigrated in 1850 and, following an arduous overland journey, settled in Salt Lake City where he laid three of the cornerstones of the Temple Wall. ²³. John Needham was one of the early converts, being baptized in the Ribble in 1838; his labours in Britain encompassed the Pottery Towns and later part of the Black Country, including Tipton and West Bromwich. ²⁴. Job F. Smith's parents were United Brethren who were converted by Wilford Woodruff in 1840. As a boy he emigrated to Nauvoo which the family reached in May 1844; he took part in the exodus from that city and the journey across the plains, deserts and mountains to the Salt Lake Valley. In 1849 he was set aside for a mission to England, his father having returned to labour three years earlier and having founded the Norwich Conference. The younger Smith laboured for five years, predominately in Bedfordshire, before returning to Utah and subsequently being appointed President of the Church in California.²⁵.

23. Thomas Day, Autobiography : C.H.O., Msd. 1182.

24. John Needham, Autobiography and Diary: C.H.O., Msd. 4221.

25. Job.F. Smith, Autobiography.

It was into the hands of such men that the Church was placed by the Apostles; they may have lacked the American experiences, which were of such value to those who were set apart for missionary work while in America, but the development and the survival of the British Mission was a testimony to the ability and faith of its "home-bred" Saints, whose labours ensured its progression into the twentieth century. 26. They expounded the tenets of Mormonism, they accepted the evangelistic mantle vacated by the Apostles and in their actions and lives personified the beliefs of their acquired religion.

The Glorious Gospel rolling forth
Among the nations of the Earth
To make the Sons of men rejoice
And Glory in a Savoirs voice

Rejoice. Rejoice. the time has come
When wars must cease and all be gone
For soon the Lord shall be suprem
And Jesus shall ever reign

We soon shall have one fold one home
For all Sons of God shall come
To dwell in Zion with their God
Be one in heart and one in love

The Gospel power is now received
By all the Saints who will believe
The Gift have come upon their heads
And by Gods Spirit these are led

26. For a detailed consideration of the calibre of the British Saints who exercised authority within the British Mission, see Chapter 4 "The Missionaries" and Chapter 6 "Midland Mormons".

To speak with Toungs and prophesy-
To know the mind of God most high
To know by vision of a Dearth
Wich soon will come upon the earth

Therefore ye sons of men take heed
To what the Lord our God decreed
That all those men who do reject
This work - must down to hell be sent 27.

The British Mission of the Mormon Church within the period 1837 to 1877 is a chronicle of two halves: the one of remarkable achievement within a section of society for whom the existing sects and denominations had had little impact; the second of a decline and the resistance to that movement, of the exertion to maintain an identity in a hostile environment. The irony is that the latter was the result of the former; the struggle to survive was the consequence of the earlier success.

27. Alfred Cordon, Journals. (Poem dated 8th July 1840).

CHAPTER 4.

THE MISSIONARIES.

We consider that there is no instance on record where men have been called to so great an undertaking, under the same circumstances of poverty, sickness and distress; both ourselves, families and brethren; but yet through the mercy of God, we think the mission will be accomplished, and will stand on record, for the wondering gaze of succeeding ages. ¹.

Of the various and diffuse factors that contributed to the success enjoyed during its infancy by the British Mission of the Mormon Church, the role of the missionaries - both those who originated in America and those who undertook a mission following their baptism into the Church in this country - was of the utmost importance; had the missionaries been lesser men in terms of the conviction, enthusiasm and zeal so evident in the interpretation of their mission, the Church for which they laboured could have remained in obscurity and the emigration of considerable numbers of the progressive working classes with its concomitant infusion of new skills into the Mormon Church and settlements in America would not have occurred. It was to the personal qualities of the missionaries that Horace Mann alluded in 1851 as he early recognized "the surprising confidence and zeal with which they promulgate their creed," ².

1. Brigham Young, Times and Seasons: Vol 1, March 1840, p. 70.
2. Census of Great Britain: Religious Worship, England and Wales 1851. (See Chapter 3, "The Mission Develops," p.121.)

The initial group of missionaries who had landed in Liverpool on 20th July 1837, although making forays to other parts of Britain, most notably Bedford and Scotland, had largely concentrated their effort upon Lancashire so that by early 1840, of the total membership of the Church in Britain, which numbered slightly less than 1,600, approximately three quarters were living in Lancashire or districts immediately adjacent to that county. ³. The habit, manifested by converts, of desiring that members of their families, not residing within the immediate area of the convert's house, should be visited by a Church member and, therefore, have the opportunity of receiving the new doctrines, ensured that there did exist rather isolated and invariably small pockets of Mormon influence within the West Midlands, as elsewhere, prior to the arrival in the spring of 1840 of arguably the most important group of the Church's missionaries to labour within the British Mission. There assembled in Britain in that year the most eminent of the Saints, men who were to direct and lead the Church for the remainder of the nineteenth century, ⁴. who were to witness the exodus from Nauvoo, the founding of the settlement in the valley of the Great Salt Lake, who organized the handcart treks across America and ultimately brought the railway to Utah, who experienced the hostile reaction of the nation when confronted by the Mormon desire for separateness and autonomy, who survived the

3. Millennial Star : Volume 1, May 1840.

4. James R. Moss, "The Kingdom Builders" in Ensign : December 1979, p. 29.

Mormon War and the occupation of their city in the desert, and who eventually led Utah towards statehood which was achieved in 1896. It is no exaggeration to suggest that a study of the personal writings and the subsequent biographies of these early missionaries reveals a comprehensive history of the Mormon Church throughout the nineteenth century.

The remarkable success of the second apostolic mission - within two years they had increased Church membership five-fold - has been recorded and celebrated within the folk-lore of the Church, often presented as a miracle rather than as the result of extraordinary dedication. The early missionaries themselves must accept responsibility for the former interpretation for they frequently employed the vocabulary of the miraculous in describing their achievements; Brigham Young concluded that the contrast between the condition of the British Mission at the time of his landing and its standing at his departure - a gap of twelve months - was indeed a miracle, ⁵ a sentiment shared by many of his contemporaries. However, more prosaic arguments may be advanced to explain the success of the British Mission, such explanation focusing upon the calibre of the missionaries, the faith of the converts and the obvious inter-action of the two parties. In most analyses of this nature, one factor has usually been overlooked: the experiences of the missionaries in America provided a unique training ground for the labour they undertook in Britain; their

5. Brigham Young, Manuscript History of Brigham Young : entry for 20th April 1841.

success within the British Mission can be related to their earlier acts of dedication and their life-styles in their homeland.

The more eminent of the missionaries who were "set aside" for the mission of 1840 had previously gained mission experience in America, and that frequently in the midst of a hostile population. Wilford Woodruff had acquired renown as a missionary over a period of six years, having undertaken an initial mission to Arkansas, Tennessee and Kentucky and two subsequent missions to the Fox Islands off the coast of Maine: Brigham Young had laboured in Canada in 1833; Heber C. Kimball's mission had taken him to the Eastern States and Canada. The labours of the missionaries in Britain may be seen as an extension of their earlier missionary work, more demanding in terms of the distances to be travelled, more uncertain in terms of labouring in another country, yet similar in terms of the work to be undertaken.

These men were pioneers, years before they were to be described as such following their initial journey to the desert and the Great Salt Lake; they had become accustomed to the hardships of pioneer life and to the frequent resiting of their homes; their pioneer existence had developed a communal response to problems and to the necessity to share their possessions, such as they were, with their fellows; separately and collectively

they had experienced hunger and exhaustion. These experiences and attributes provided a degree of preparedness and resolve upon which they could draw for inspiration and sustenance when confronted by difficulties during their British mission. Additionally, they helped develop the mutual sympathy and respect that was quickly manifested between missionary and British convert; the often noted problem of a class distinction between preacher and congregation within the established denominations did not arise in the relationship between the missionary and the British convert, as the latter readily and frequently acknowledged.

The resolve of the missionaries to fulfil the revelation that they should assemble in the grounds of the Temple at Far West, Missouri, a state noted for its hostility and whose governor had proclaimed that Mormons "must be exterminated or driven from the State,"⁶ is witness to their determination and faith. By commencing their mission with this act of worship and the laying of the cornerstone of the Temple by Alpheus Cutler, the missionaries manifested defiance of the Missourians, gave an act of leadership to the few persecuted Saints remaining in that state, demonstrated their determination to act as a corporate body - as they would need to do during their British Mission - and illustrated, beyond doubt, their suitability to undertake that mission.

6. Donna Hill, *Op. cit.* : p.234.

Parting from families, often in the most distressing of circumstances, constituted an additional test of the missionaries' resolve, for it called for a devotion of extraordinary intensity. Woodruff's leave-taking was typical of many and indicates qualities in both the missionary and his wife, whose contribution to the mission should not be overlooked.

The 7th of August was the last day I spent at home in Montrose. Although sick with chills and fever most of the day, I made what preparations I could to start on the morrow on a mission of four thousand miles, to preach the gospel to the nations of the earth; and this, too, without purse or scrip, with disease resting upon me, and an attack of fever and ague afflicting me once every two days.

Early upon the morning of the 8th August, I arose from my bed of sickness, laid my hands upon the head of my sick wife, Phoebe, and blessed her. I then departed from the embrace of my companion, and left her almost without food or the necessities of life. She suffered my departure with the fortitude that becomes a Saint, realizing the responsibilities of her companion. ⁷.

Brigham Young's experiences parallel those of Woodruff; he also departed from Montrose in ill-health being "unable to go thirty rods to the river without assistance." ⁸. He left his wife likewise ill and nursing a baby only ten days old, his older children were so ill they were unable to assist one another.

7. Wilford Woodruff, Journals : entry for 7th August 1839. See also Matthias F. Cowley, Wilford Woodruff : p. 109.
8. Eugene England, Brother Brigham : Utah, 1970, p. 39.

Such were the personal conditions of these two major figures when they commenced their mission journeys; that they did so in these circumstances illustrates the strength of conviction of the missionaries concerning the revelation their Prophet had received and the discipline that already permeated the Church. When they arrived in Britain, they may have been drained by the rigours of travel but they had already served the most appropriate of apprenticeships.

Whilst undoubtedly the early Mormon missionaries preached a sectarianism that was unique in many respects, their belief in the millennium and their conviction of its imminence placed them within a tradition of millenarian belief in Britain, a belief which had intensified during the half century prior to the missionaries' arrival; indeed in crossing the Atlantic they found themselves heirs to a tradition of millenarianism that occupied an eminent position in much of sectarian religion and had been experienced at a level of folk-culture for a number of generations.

Natural disasters and political upheaval had long been interpreted by significant numbers of the population as indications that the millennial reign was near; the earthquake in Lisbon of 1755 or the advent of the French Revolution heralded its coming. In its early editions the Millennial Star was replete with accounts

of the disasters then currently overtaking the world and in their preaching the missionaries encouraged all who would respond to leave the iniquity of their own nation and assemble at Zion, where they could prepare for and ultimately welcome the millennium. It was this latter teaching that extended conventional adventism, for Mormonism replaced a passive watching for the second coming with the exhortation that physical endeavour was required of its converts who were to welcome Christ in the land that had witnessed part of his former activities on earth; the true Church was to be raised in America from whence it would indict the apostate church of Europe; America was sanctified as the chosen land. ⁹. To this doctrine was added the tenet that all who accepted the Mormon faith would evolve into gods and thus they assumed a sanctity with baptism and accepted the title of Latter-Day Saint. A belief in man's potential for progress and indeed his obligation to self-improvement was therefore appended to the movement's millennial doctrine and provided an added incentive to those who accepted this new Church. Millennialism was thus assimilated with contemporary American belief in progress and the inherent goodness of man; ¹⁰. the working classes in England, nurtured in the former tradition, were presented with an intriguing amalgam of the established and the new.

9. Mormon doctrine affirmed that following his resurrection, Christ had appeared in America. It therefore followed that his new reign should also be celebrated upon that sanctified land.

10. Bryan Wilson, Religious Sects : London, 1970, p.198.

The position accorded its Prophet by the Mormon Church would also be a recognizable teaching to a number within the English millennial tradition, for during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries there had been witnessed in this country the claims of various self-styled prophets to receive direct revelation. Foremost among these had been Richard Brothers and Joanna Southcott, the former of whom claimed to be a descendant of James, the brother of Jesus, and claimed a commission to lead those whose origins lay with the lost tribes of Israel back to the Holy Land. Joanna Southcott, identified herself with the "woman clothed with the sun" of Revelation Chapter 12, and proclaimed herself the redeemer of mankind, as verification of which she should be divested of a son, a virgin conception, at the age of sixty-five. Today these seemingly bizarre prophecies attract scepticism; historically they attracted adherents to their respective sects. A measure of the numbers involved may be gained from the Southcottian practice of members submitting to a test, upon the successful completion of which they received their prophet's seal. By 1815, twenty thousand of these seals had been issued, those who received them becoming the nucleus of the sect, beyond whom would be the less committed and the occasional readers of pamphlets.

That the Southcottian doctrine could receive such a response is an indication of millennial belief just two decades

before the arrival of the first Mormon missionaries; that twenty thousand persons should seal themselves to the daughter of a Devon farmer who claimed to be pregnant with Shiloh (Genesis, Chapter 49) suggests that the claims of the son of a Vermont farmer, when presented by the missionaries of the Church he founded, would to certain ears lack the extravagance more usually associated with them. "The millenarian was by no means so cranky, isolated and unrepresentative as a first reading of millenarian pamphlets might suggest." ¹¹. This being so, it must have been of considerable consequence to the early Mormon missionaries who thus found prospective converts already receptive to this aspect of their teaching.

The suggestion that the Mormon missionaries were neither unrepresentative nor unique gains credence from a consideration of one of the lesser known sects of the nineteenth century, the Wroeites, who emerged during the crisis of succession that followed the death of Joanna Southcott. John Wroe, their founder, gained a notoriety for his personal conduct, whilst his followers were noted for their outlandish dress. His headquarters at Ashton-under-Lyme he conceived of as Zion and at four prominent points on the outskirts of the town he erected the "gates of the temple," intending to join them by means of a wall and so build

11. J.F.C.Harrison, The Second Coming: Popular Millenarianism 1780 - 1850 : London, 1979, p. 85.

what might resemble a medieval city. He failed in this objective, his infamous conduct causing him to abandon his head-quarters. Some twenty years later, however, in 1853, over fifty congregations of his followers, the Christian Israelites - so named after his belief that the lost tribes of Israel were to be found in Victorian England - were still in existence. Of greater significance, though, are the observations of a contemporary author, William Cooke Taylor, in his Notes of a Tour of the Manufacturing District of Lancaster,^{12.} written in 1842, for he recorded that many of the Wroeites in Ashton had accepted the teachings of the Mormon Church and become converts. Similarities in emphasis within the Christian Israelite movement and the Mormon Church enhance the argument that the Mormon missionaries who brought their message to England would have found pockets of "seekers" awaiting their doctrine.

Wroe was in many respects a lesser Joseph Smith. The mob violence against Wroe and the attempts on his life were mild presages of the events in Illinois in 1844. The teaching of both men was a vestigial Christianity, heavily overlaid with a new revelation. Both sects were committed to a type of this-worldly redemption; and the building of Zion in Salt Lake City would be no bad exchange for the establishment of the New Jerusalem in Ashton. The same authoritarian rule by the prophet (whose private life was not beyond reproach), the insistence on observing outward rules and codes of conduct, and the resultant high standards of ethical behaviour (noted by most fair-minded observers) characterized the two sects.^{13.}

12. Ibid : p. 147.

13. Ibid : p. 148.

The country, then, to which the missionaries of 1837 and 1840 brought their message was one accustomed to the claims of contemporary prophets and one in which a belief in the millennium was established within certain sections of the population. This, the sectarian response to millenarian teachings, also had a secularized counterpart which was to be found within the language of social reform, most notably in the writings and lectures of Robert Owen. The relationship between Owenism and certain millennial sects is of specific interest. Owen was certainly sympathetic to the Shakers' attempt to adopt a communitarian life style in Niskeyuna, New York State, where Ann Lee had founded her colony and which Owen visited in 1824. Owen's own experiment at Harmony, Indiana, occupied land purchased from Father George Rapp, whose Rappite community was distinctly millennialist. In England, the Owenite Institution in Gray's Inn Road, afforded a meeting place for Edward Irving and his congregation, who were firmly within the millennial tradition. Above all, however, it was in the language employed by Owen that the influence of the millennial may be witnessed, for, secular though the message was, it was conveyed in familiar rhetoric.

The day of your deliverance is come, and let us join heart and hand in extending that deliverance, first to those who are near, then to those who are more and more remote, until it shall pass to all people, even to the uttermost parts of the earth. Then will be the full

time of that universal sabbath, a reign of happiness, which is about to commence here and which I trust you who are ready to put on the wedding garment will long live to enjoy. ^{14.}

An anathema to many, the Mormon doctrines, would, however, be recognizably within an established tradition, yet one that encompassed an exceptionally broad church whose beliefs extended from a simple conservative acceptance of the millennium to the extravagant prophecies of Southcott and Wroe, via the socialism of Owen. A tradition with this breadth and containing a considerable variety of sectarian practices would offer the Mormon missionaries an advantage, namely a fertile field in which to sow their seed; conversely it contained a challenge which would develop into opposition, for the contempt reserved for Southcottians or Wroeites could be concentrated upon the new intrusion into the adventist arena and as the new teachings extended their influence and attracted converts, so the intrusion was treated more seriously and the purveyors of its gospel vilified.

The early Mormon missionaries were heirs to a further tradition. Whatever else had been severed between Britain and America, the bond between the parent country and its offspring remained intact within the context of revivalist religion. During the first four decades of the nineteenth century, a period

14. Quoted by J.F.C. Harrison, Robert Owen and the Owenites in Britain and America : London, 1969, p. 102.

that approximates to the Second Great Awakening of evangelical practice in America, the American religious presses had printed a considerable volume of literature for consumption in Britain. In the words of the Congregational Magazine, this had "produced an unusual impression in the minds of our ministers and churches in town and country." 15. Additionally, personal visits by a number of American ministers encouraged the developing British interest: William Patton, a Presbyterian pastor, had made two visits in 1825 and 1828 and had fostered a particular connection with Carr's Lane Congregational Chapel in Birmingham; the second of these missions had coincided with an intensive preaching itinerary undertaken throughout the Midlands. by William Buell Sprague. However, arguably the most influential and distinguished of revivalist ministers to cross the Atlantic was Asahel Nettleton, who again concentrated upon the industrial centres and who two decades earlier had been a powerful force in American revivalism. By 1837, and the arrival of the initial Mormon mission, the appearance of an American minister or preacher would undoubtedly have stimulated a particular interest both among church membership and the curious; they would not, however, have been accorded a uniqueness, sometimes ascribed to them by reviewers of a later generation.

The American revivalists imported the established practices of their homeland : the greater involvement of lay preachers; the concentration within the Sunday School upon the scriptures, the

15. Quoted by Richard Carwardine, Trans-Atlantic Revivalism, Popular Evangelicalism in Britain and America, 1790 -1865: Connecticut, 1978. p. 59.

protracted meeting, which was particularly associated with Edward Norris Kirk, formerly of Albany Presbyterian Church and who, like Patton, devoted much of his time to Carr's Lane Birmingham; the anxious meeting. Although apparently too vulgar for the middle class elements of dissent, open-air preaching and tent services proliferated throughout the fourth and fifth decades of the nineteenth century as the British evangelical tradition and the practices of American revivalism merged. The frontiers of industrialism in Britain became the metaphorical equivalent of the American frontier; the developing centres of industry, where the power of the Established Church had been weakened by its failure to come to terms with the social upheaval of the Industrial Revolution, became Britain's "burnt-over district".

The loose and diffuse traditions of revivalist and millennial religion acted as forbears to the initial Mormon mission; explanations of the development of the Mormon Church that omit reference to these traditions may emphasize the stature of the men who undertook the missions, but will remain incomplete. In its insistence upon a lay ministry and its missionaries accepting the role of itinerant, the Mormon Church acted in common with much of evangelical religion. It demanded of its missionaries that they should proceed without scrip or purse, relying upon inspiration and their faith to recompense for the lack of the former, and the charity and goodness of those amongst whom they laboured to provide

for their upkeep. Sarah Carter, whose parents were among the United Brethren of Herefordshire who received the Mormon teachings recalled the missionaries accepting the hospitality afforded by the family home.

My father kept an open house for the elders. Many, many times my father and mother gave their bed to the elders, while they would take a quilt and sleep on the floor in another room, never letting the elders know they had given up their bed for them. They always made the elders welcome and fed them the best they had. 16.

The itinerancy of the missionaries was meticulously recorded by most; their journals and diaries read as travelogues, escorting the reader through the industrial centres and rural landscapes of the country. The more loquacious of Mormon journalists recorded a detailed appreciation of the areas through which they travelled and the historic monuments they observed. Brigham Young, en route from the Potteries to Herefordshire on 21st April 1840, registered his response to Dudley Castle, Worcester Cathedral, where he attended afternoon service, the Malvern Hills and the Herefordshire Beacons. 17. On that occasion he journeyed by coach but throughout the early years of the mission it was more common for the itinerant preachers to take their message from village to village on foot. A physical demand was thus made upon the missionaries; endurance and tenacity were called for; for the American Saints.

16. Sarah Carter, "Autobiography" in Our Pioneer Heritage: editor Kate B. Carter, Volume 12, Utah, 1969, p. 227.

17. Brigham Young, Manuscript History: entry for 21st April 1840.

their experiences in their native land again proved invaluable.

Wilford Woodruff, the most influential of the early missionaries to the Midlands, itemized his labours during 1840: in all he travelled 4,469 miles in England in pursuance of his mission, attended 230 services and officiated at 336 baptisms.¹⁸ A hardy constitution was a prerequisite for a missionary.

The eminent missionaries of 1837 and 1840 determined the practice and custom for those who were to follow them. A decade after Woodruff's initial mission, Jesse W. Crosby was called upon to labour in England; his experiences are strikingly parallel to those of Woodruff. Crosby was a man of thirty when he was set aside and had already occupied a part in Mormon history, having resided in Nauvoo and subsequently in the Salt Lake Valley, where he arrived just two months after the pioneer party.

Spring came, and at the April Conference I was called in Company with seven others, to go on missions to England. We had 16 days notice to get ready for a journey of some 8,000 miles. I accordingly set about the work and made every provision within my reach for my wife and children, three in number, the youngest Samuel Obed, born August 27th 1849, but eight months old. I got ready to leave my family, my farm, city lot, house etc. that I had toiled so hard to improve and on 15th April bid farewell to the beautiful Valley and left all for Christ's sake, and the Gospels, to go to a foreign nation and travel without purse or scrip, in the midst of this unfriendly and uncharitable generation, far away from kind friends and Happy Home.¹⁹

18. Wilford Woodruff, Journal : entry for 6th January 1841.

19. Jesse W. Crosby, Diary: C.H.O., Mf 872.

From the commencement of the British Mission, the custom of the American missionaries assuming the presidencies of the British conferences had been established; Crosby presided over the Warwickshire Conference for eighteen months from September 1850, during which period in the furtherance of his duties he travelled 5,674 miles, of which 2,735 were on foot. 20. Additionally, he preached over four hundred public discourses and was responsible for the baptism of three hundred converts, these services being performed by Elders under his authority, his "calling being more particularly to preach the Gospel, to counsel and direct."

A study of the diaries, journals and records of those American missionaries who journeyed to Britain during the first forty years of the British Mission suggests a pattern of experience was common to most : the sacrifice of leaving one's family usually in the most distressing of circumstances; the acceptance of the responsibility of having been set aside; the difficulties of the journey to Britain; the undertaking of a largely itinerant role involving considerable travel; the confronting of opposition which took various forms from the verbal to the violent; the relying upon others to provide for one's needs.

To be set aside was, in fact, a major test of one's faith and principles, for the sacrifice was not requested of the missionary only, but of all the immediate members of his family. The circumstances

attendant upon the leavetakings of Brigham Young and Wilford Woodruff from their respective families were to be repeated for many later missionaries. Charles E. Griffin was informed by letter from the President's Office that he had been set aside for a mission in 1875.

It did not take me long to think over my circumstances, no home to leave my family in, no means for me to leave them to live upon, and no prospect of getting any money only the two hundred I have mentioned above. It would take at least one hundred and fifty dollars to bear my expenses to England and then I ought to have a little money to fit myself out before I started. The prospects were that I would not have much to leave my family. ²¹.

Griffin's account indicates that the responsibility for meeting the expenses of the journey to England, lay with the Church member who was set aside; it was both a further test of loyalty and faith and a mark of distinction. The missionary's analysis of his circumstances contained neither lament nor romance; his rationale was succinct : " I could not leave my family in quite as good circumstances as I would like to, yet if I am called to go I shall go, and my faith is that the way will be opened for me to go and for my family to obtain a living..... I will be subject to the counsel and decision of the President". ²².

Bryan Wilson, in his consideration of sects, has observed that "individuals are admitted only on proof of conviction, or by some test of merit: continuing affiliation rests on sustained

21. Charles E. Griffin, History of Charles E. Griffin : B.Y.U., M270,

22. Ibid.

evidence of commitment to sect beliefs and practices.

Sectarians put their faith first; they order their lives in accordance with it." 23. Without doubt, those Saints who

were set aside to labour on a foreign soil put their faith first and permitted it to determine their mode of existence.

Theodore Turley could, therefore, leave his children "five of them being sick with fever and my wife worne out with feteague all seeming to cry to me its impossable for you to go" 24.

Thirty years later Alma Eldredge expressed his sense of ordeal as he reflected upon the first twelve months of his mission and its enforced separation.

Twelve Month today, that I did bid adieu to my Dear wife and children, at home, and here I am now in the Old Town of Worcester, neverless the thoughts that revert to the scene at Home, seem like golden cords streached over land and sea binding that far off land with this remote region. 25.

The simile of the golden cord does not suffer from a lack of originality; in its simplicity lies its sincerity, as Eldredge conveys the emotion of his separation, not as a landmark but as proof of his faith both in his religion and in his personal union; he finds strength in the trial of separation.

23. Bryan Wilson, Op. cit. : p.7.

24. Theodore Turley, Reminiscences and Journal : C.H.O., Msd 1950.

25. Alma Eldredge, Reminiscences and Diary : C.H.O., Msd. 5125.

Although the Mormon missionaries had accepted the title of Saint and the implications consequent upon that acceptance, the hardships of the mission were no less real and the test they imposed had to be faced. As has been noted, the early American missionaries had unwittingly been prepared for the rigours of the mission, both physically and psychologically, by their experiences on the American frontier. As the mission progressed, however, British converts were sustained in the various offices of the Church and numbers undertook missions, primarily within the British mission field. Exceptionally, English converts accepted the role of missionary to lands beyond their home, the most notable of these, during the formative years of the British Mission, being a convert from the Potteries, William Barratt, who conveyed the Mormon faith to South Australia, the first member of the Church to journey to that country. In a letter to Alfred Cordon, the President of the Staffordshire Conference, he expressed his apprehension at the undertaking : "I feel as the Apostle expresses it, like a lamb among wolves, going into a land of strangers to preach the Gospel; therefore I desire your prayers on my behalf." 26. With few exceptions, however, the British converts who were set apart for mission work were to labour within a different conference of their own country. The sense of separation to which their American counterparts alluded may

26. Millennial Star: Vol 1, August 1840. Letter from William Barratt to Alfred Cordon, 15th July 1840.

not, therefore, have provided a test of the faith and suitability of the British Mormon to undertake the mission; for the British convert, however, the experience of undertaking a mission in his own country was equally demanding and arduous. Called to relinquish his employment, he was subject to the faith and charity of family and Church members; poverty had to be accepted as did the knowledge that accepting the commission of the mission field placed an obligation upon others who would have to labour to support the missionary. James Bullock of Bedworth, Warwickshire, was baptized a Mormon in 1850 and was subsequently called upon to give up his work and devote a period of his life to the labours of an itinerant preacher. His Journal tells of the problems he faced: having received only a notional education, the difficulties he experienced in formulating his discourses; the nights when he was forced to sleep out of doors; the dearth of members who attended meetings, usually in private rooms, and the consequent paucity of the collections held to sustain him. 27.

James Palmer, whose parents had been members of the United Brethren converted by Woodruff in Gloucestershire, acknowledged the sacrifices made by his immediate family in order to support his labour. Following a period of itinerant preaching, he was reunited with his parents and family.

27. James Bullock, Journal : B.Y.U., Ms. 52.

Time had-arrived for me to return home and reblenish my stock of clothing, this may appear straining to the thoughtful Reader, but so it was in those early days of the church many of the Elders were poorly clad and not always fed, and most of the time without money enough to frank a letter, hence it was that my Parents, my Brother Henry and my Sister Mary, worked for money and administered to my necessities, and sustained me, while engaged in the ministry of the Gospel. 28.

The support of a family who provided both material and moral well-being and who were all members of the Church was obviously a major incentive to a travelling preacher such as Palmer; it was, of course, not a state to be enjoyed by all who accepted a missionary role within the Church: John Spiers of Redmarley, Worcestershire, had been compelled to leave his parents' home following his baptism and the consequent persecutions orchestrated by his brother; 29. John Bourne, a Potteries Saint, had likewise received notice that he must either relinquish his Church membership or leave home after he had been accepted into the Church by Alfred Cordon in December 1839; 30. William Williams returned from a mission in the spring of 1841 to his family home, anxious to see his parents, only to occasion their eviction. Lord Beauchamp, upon whose land his father worked, informed the family that they should either close the door to their son or be evicted after a tenancy of forty years. 31. For these missionaries and the many

28. James Palmer, Reminiscences : C.H.O., Ms.885.

29. John Spiers, Reminiscences and Diary : C.H.O.. Ms.909.

30. John Bourne, Reminiscences : C.H.O., Msd. 473.

31. William Williams, Diary : C.H.O. Msd.218.

who experienced similar occurrences, their labours were as much a testimony to their faith as were those of the American missionaries who had left their families in varying degrees of poverty and deprivation; they also put their faith first and ordered their lives in accordance with the demands imposed by that faith.

One particularly sensitive expression of the pressures under which the missionaries laboured has been left by John Redington. Whilst observing Church members commencing their emigration from Cheltenham, some crippled, some having left their families only that morning, he expressed his admiration for their determination and tenacity:

Surely there is a power about their religion, which but few have ever realized (except those who receive the Gospel) to induce people of this kind to leave their home and relatives, for a strange land and strange people (except being members of the same Church) to undergo all the trials and privations that must attend such an undertaking. ³².

Standing in awe of their faith and sharing their trials, Redington was, however, himself experiencing a moment when he was questioning his own ability to pursue the undertaking which the Church had asked of him, his mission. The pessimism and

32. John Redington, Journal 1859 - 1905 : C.H.O., Msd. 4514.

doubts which must have afflicted a number of missionaries were experienced by Redington, the sense of an inability to progress, the sense of one's own limitations, the sense of an overwhelming frustration.

I have been almost induced to write to my Pastor and resign my position, and give up Travelling and go to labour in some other direction. The reason is because I cannot enjoy myself in my labours, it seems and has done for a length of time to be all "up hill" work, I cannot get things along (more especially the Financial part of the work) at all to my satisfaction. My field of labour does not do me any credit, although I have endeavoured to do the best I can to bring things along, I feel almost disheartened, I have been waiting and hoping and Believing, that things would improve month after month, but have not realized, as yet, my expectations. Still I yet hope that things will be more favourable shortly, prospects are now brighter than they have been for a length of time past. But I feel as though I have not got the Spirit of Travelling, and under these circumstances I sometimes think I could do more good in another direction. I have no desire to forsake my Religion, God forbid, I should ever do that ! 33.

Redington did continue with his missionary labours, interestingly gaining solace by sharing his experience with a travelling Elder, E. Samuel, who was undergoing similar feelings at that time. In one sense, this is a characteristic example of the self-help and camaraderie that existed within and was necessitated by the conditions of the mission field.

33. Ibid.

To middle-class elements of dissent, certain of the practices and ceremonies of the missionaries were excessive and of doubtful taste; the same allegation, however, would be levelled against other evangelical sects. Certainly the camp meeting, one of the earliest of which had as its venue a field near Stoke and was attended by Woodruff, Turley and G.A. Smith (June 1840), ³⁴. would fall into this category. The camp meeting, of course, was in no sense exclusive to the Mormon Church, being widely practised by evangelical sects prior to the arrival of Latter-Day Saints. Specifically, however, the claim to have received the gift of tongues, a claim repeatedly made, invited ridicule and deprecation and yet there is no doubting either the sincerity of the claims of Mormon missionaries and converts to have received this dispensation or the importance which they attributed to this gift.

Job Smith, who followed his father, Thomas, into the Church and, like his father, became a prominent British missionary, has left his testimony of receiving and practising the gift of tongues in company with other members who also enjoyed this ability.

34. John Needham, Autobiography and Diary.

On the 25th December, 1840, at a place called Turkey Hall where a meeting was being held, I was ordained to the office of teacher, and appointed to teach in several branches of the church including Frogs-marsh, Bran Green and scattering members. I was also appointed book agent under the direction of the elders. To this work I gave my diligent attention, being also often put forward by the elders to speak in their meetings. Saints were exhorted to seek for spiritual blessings, following St. Paul's counsel in this regard. Many spoke in tongues and some prophesied, and the gift of tongues fell upon me, so that on several occasions it was involuntary, when I rose to bear my testimony. 35.

Smith was contemporary with James Palmer : both had previously belonged to the United Brethren; following their respective conversions they accepted roles within the mission field and eventually emigrated within a year of each other. Like Smith, Palmer also experienced the gift of tongues although his experience was personal rather than communal.

On my way I became somewhat fatigued, and I withdrew a short distance from the roade where I was hid from the sight of man, by a small group of trees this place was to me a pleasant retreat; for all was quiet around me, it was in this place that my heart was tutchted as with the finger of Gods love and my soul was drawn out in fervent prayer an So earnestly that on a sudden my heart began to leap and did burn within me with a holy and sacred joy, and soon I discovered I was Praying in an unknown tongue. I was praying in the Spirit but my understanding was unfruitful,

this lack was now aparant to my mind, for sometimes past in my Prayers I had made it a subject, to ask the lord to kindly bestow upon me the gifts of the Spirit such as the gift of tongues with interpretations and as spoken of by the Apostle Paul, as a confirmation of my faith in the great work of which I am engaged and allso to acquire if posible a liveing testimony of its truths for myself and furthermore my desire was to learn to know god whoom to know is life eternal; I must here state that I arose and went forth with a Joyful heart and was never before so happy as on that blessed and eventful day, then suddenly came the words of the apostle Paul again in my mind, if anyone speak in tongues let him pray that he may Interpret that his understanding may be fruitful, here then again I found a subject of equal importance still binding upon me and a Spiritual gift of great importance to be acquired and I soon discovered that by praying and fasting this blessing was shortly obtained and I received the gift of interpretation allso which I have always felt as a sacred gift and should be prayerfully guarded. 36.

Whatever the exact experiences of Palmer, Smith or many other missionaries and converts who claimed to have been blessed with the gift of tongues, their conviction that they were the recipients of a divine communication, revelation and manifestation should not be in doubt. Theirs was a Church whose Prophet had been visited by the Angel Moroni, had recovered the golden plates, had been able to translate them from their hieroglyphics into English with divine assistance; to speak in tongues was to come closer to the founder and Prophet who had experienced the ultimate in this type of communication. It also indicates the emotionalism that has to be recognized as an important aspect of the belief held by the early members of the Church. Against a background

of conflict, the churches and sects displaying their obvious differences, the social upheaval of the urbanization of much of the country, this Church offered an alternative: Babylon was to be rejected, the elite, those who were able to display a commitment to the sect, were to gather in Zion and escape the conflagration. The missionaries appealed to the emotional instincts, offering survival and victory through unity, by being accepted as one of the elect; to speak in tongues was to illustrate the fitness of the members to be one of a select sect. The missionaries, like those they received into the Church were not particularly well educated; their response to Mormonism was instinctive rather than intellectual; they relied upon instinct and emotion in their preaching; they ordered their lives in acknowledgement of their faith and belief. In claiming to speak in tongues they recognised a religion whose heritage lay deep in past centuries, they associated themselves with the patriarchs of the Bible and with Saint Paul. It is interesting that Palmer prayed for this gift; before he claimed to have received it, he had defined its significance; it was a sign both to him and from him; it illustrated his personal commitment. It also allied Mormonism to the more emotional of evangelical sects.

This last point may also be applied to their belief in the Devil, whose presence was a challenge to their mission and

who had to be overcome. Alfred Cordon provides a personal experience of being confronted by the Devil and relates this to a further test of his faith. Cordon had only turned to religion when in need of consolation following the death of his first child. Now, an active member of the Mormon Church, his wife's illness in the later stages of pregnancy posed again a test of his belief.

Now the lord was about to try our Faith I talked to her but her confidence was gone about Midnight Emily Glover one of the Sisters came to our house My Wife got worse and worse she was possessed of a devil which was writhing and twisting her body in many dreadful ways I went to Prayer I was tempted verry much to think that there was no God she still got worse about five o Clock in the morning I was sorely harressed and tried by the Devil that there was no God and that the Religion of Jesus Christ was all a Delusion.

I reasoned within myself thus that I believed in God and I professed to believe the Bible for I had Obeyed its Precepts and I had Found happiness and Peace so I was determined to stand upon it if I was Damned at last. I now found that the trial of My Faith was more Precious than Gold and I went up Stairs I was determined to have the Victory the Sisters were troubled sorely Sister Elizabeth stood by me like a Woman of God.

I layed hands upon her we prayed she began to exercise Faith in the promises of God I rebuked the Devil in the name of Jesus Christ and he departed her pain left her and she was delivered of a Man Child without much pain but the Child was Dead the Devil had destroyed it and he did all he could to put an end to the Mother but Praise the Lord for his Goodness this learned me such a lesson as i never learned before. 37.

In associating adversity with the hand of the devil, Cordon adopts a primitivist stance, but there would have been little unusual in this for many in both sects and denominations interpreted the devil as an active being or personage. Today the Established Church occasionally conducts services of exorcism; that evangelical preachers one hundred and fifty years ago should apply the allegory of good and evil in conflict and explain personal misfortune in terms of the devil's involvement, should surprise no one. Indeed the Church to which Cordon belonged was prone to confirm the intervention of the devil in all difficulties with which it was faced and so metaphor fused with reality. Thus the temporary interruption of emigration in 1858, occasioned by the crisis in Utah, the Mormon War, was presented to the converts in Britain, who awaited emigration, as "the Lord in his wisdom has seen fit to allow the Devil to hedge up the way." 38.

Reference to the devil and, conversely, to the miraculous nature and success of the British Mission, readily became a facet of Mormon vocabulary. The intervention of a divine power in the affairs of men was firmly established as an article of faith and belief for Church members and the claims of missionaries to have witnessed miracles performed in the name of their Church were numerous during the formative years of the mission. Job Smith

38. Millennial Star : Vol 20, 8th May 1858.

claimed to have witnessed one such occurrence on the occasion of his own baptism, which took place on 18th May 1840 and was conducted by three Apostles, Brigham Young, Willard Richards and Wilford Woodruff. He was one of a large number to be baptized and confirmed, among whom was a Miss Pitt "who had been a cripple using crutches eleven years." Smith claimed that she was "healed under the apostles' hands" and dispensed with her crutches; shortly afterwards she became the wife of Thomas Kington, formerly the leader of the United Brethren.³⁹ A similar claim to have witnessed a miracle cure was advanced by James Bell and related to a Mormon Sister, Mary Bolland, aged twenty five, who resided in Paul Street, Wolverhampton. Prior to her baptism she had suffered from a rupture which required the wearing of supportive garments. These she removed for the act of baptism and ignored afterwards, being perfectly cured.⁴⁰ George Halliday claimed that a child born to William and Elizabeth Bounsell had been afflicted with blindness from birth but that upon its being anointed by a Mormon elder, John Hackwell, the child was able to see out of both eyes. Apparently an antagonist of the Mormons in Bristol, Charles Smith, had previously been challenged to effect a cure prior to the intervention of Hackwell. As witnesses to the miracle, both parents signed a statement of substantiation, which appeared in the Millennial Star.⁴¹

39. Job Smith, Autobiography.

40. Millennial Star : Vol 11, 1st May 1849.

41. Millennial Star : Vol 11, 15th December, 1849.

Claims to have performed miracle cures in the name of the Church or to have been a witness to such acts. occur frequently during the first twenty or thirty years of Mormon activity in Britain; thereafter such references become fewer and more selective. In content they range from the curing of minor ailments - William Heywood attended to the ordinances for the daughter of a Sister Walsh in Market Drayton during June of 1848, the girl suffering from a mass of head sores which disappeared within a few days of her being accepted into the Church ⁴². - to the claim to have cured the blindness of the Bounsell child. Speculative explanations for these claims are, of course possible: there may have been exaggeration on the part of those who recorded the so-called miracles; a co-incidence of natural cure and a religious act is possible; many Church members, steeped in a tradition of translating natural phenomenon into the miraculous, were anticipating and praying for signs that would further confirm them in their beliefs. Whilst, in all probability, explanation is, in fact, an amalgam of all these suggestions, the third argument; that of members having a positive desire to interpret the unusual as the miraculous, merits particular consideration. The majority of British converts and consequently British missionaries came not from the mass of unbelievers but from the body of seekers who had moved from sect to sect in their quest for the truth. ⁴³. Arguably

42. Millennial Star: Vol 11, 9th September, 1849.

43. For a more detailed consideration of the background of British converts and their previous religious affiliations, refer to Chapter 6, "Midland Mormons".

they were actually awaiting the message that the missionaries brought, and the first generation of converts comprised many who conformed to this pattern of previous conduct. They possessed a minimum of education but a considerable capacity for belief in the intervention of the divine in the lives of men. Likewise, many of the early missionaries of both American and British origin lacked the sophistication of their successors who, in general, had received a better education. To a generation who turned to Mormonism as a respite from the uncertainty of sectarian conflict and industrial upheaval, a miracle was a manifestation of the correctness of their conversion; it both substantiated and sustained their faith. It is interesting that, as the century progressed and education was gradually made available to all in England, then subsequently made compulsory for all, there was a corresponding decline in the recorded claims to have witnessed miracles. The early Mormons were of a simpler generation, the heirs to an evangelical religion where a belief in the miraculous was a corollary to the awe in which they held their Maker. The belief in the miraculous must not, however, be dismissed; what is important is that both missionaries and converts saw in these acts a divine involvement; they believed they had participated in or witnessed a miracle; and that this, therefore, was an important act of faith that unified the membership and linked the individual to the founder and Prophet, Joseph Smith, who received direct

revelation.

In one aspect of their preaching, the missionaries were in accordance with an influential area of Victorian respectability; their insistence upon abstinence won them a valued ally in the Temperance Movement. Heber C. Kimball had early realized and appreciated the merit of this association.

In almost every place we went where there was a temperance hall, we could get it to preach in, many believing that we made men temperate faster than they did, for as soon as men obeyed the Gospel they abandoned their excesses in drinking; none of us drank any kind of spirits, porter; small beer, or even wine; neither did we drink tea, coffee or chocolate. ⁴⁴.

Kimball, of course, had been instrumental in the initial mission of 1837 gaining preaching accommodation at the Cockpit, Preston, then owned by the Temperance Society of that town. In the Staffordshire Potteries, three years later, G.A. Smith, one of the Apostles, was to receive similar assistance and enjoy the favour of the Temperance Movement.

Smith had been opposed by a local Methodist preacher, William W. Player, who had challenged him on specific biblical interpretations. Unable to provide factual answers to Player's questions, Smith acknowledged his limitations, adding that all

44. Orson F. Whitney, Op. cit. : p.152.

too often preachers attempted explanation without real understanding, giving their "own ignorant opinions instead of teaching the principles of truth." This, Smith felt, was at the heart of sectarian differences. Apparently respecting Smith's honesty, Player introduced himself as President of the Longton Temperance Society and invited the missionary to address the society on total abstinence.

The town being notified by the Crier, the Hall was crowded and I addressed them at 4 o' clock in the afternoon in a manner which seemed highly to gratify the audience. We then procured the Hall from the Temperance Society for three meetings on Sundays, and three meetings in the week, for the mere expense of cleaning, which was 10 pence a week. We continued our meetings there until the Branch numbered 100, and Mr. Player became the Presiding Elder.⁴⁵

The mutual support of the Mormon Church and the Temperance Movement was certainly beneficial to the former, since it often provided a venue for missionaries and supplied a partial audience as well. Indeed, there appear to have been occasions when the two organizations fused and Mormon missionaries were identified as speaking under the auspices of the Temperance Movement. John Needham observed that he had witnessed Smith labouring in Leek "speaking for the Temperance Society,"⁴⁶ while Richard Steele

45. G. A. Smith, "My Journal", 18th May 1840, in The Instructor, a Mormon Journal : Vol 82, No.7, July 1947, p. 367.

46. John Needham, Autobiography and Diary.

recorded that Alfred Cordon had similarly preached in Leek on 9th October 1840 when he advised that "strong drinks, hot drinks, snuff and tobacco were not good for the Body." 47.

Indirectly the Temperance Movement advanced the cause of Mormonism, providing a forum for preaching and, of equal importance, conferring a respectability upon the Church whose missionaries had reason to be grateful to this established institution of Victorian Britain.

The apostolic mission of 1837 commenced the tradition of American Saints labouring within the British Mission. Excepting 1838, no year passed without the Church in America setting aside missionaries for this work. During the first decade of its Mission the Church was extremely conservative in the number it selected to undertake this task, the average number of missionaries it dispatched being only seven. However, once the Church had established itself in Utah, so it increased its missionary activity: in 1850 it set aside thirty Saints and ten years later seventy. As the membership of the British Mission declined from the early 1850s, the number of missionaries coming to this country was steadily increased, this reflecting the standing of the Church in America rather than the potential for recruits in Britain. During the forty years which span the period from the initial mission to the death of Brigham Young (1877) the Church directed 1166 missionaries to labour in Britain,

47. Richard Steele, Diaries: C.H.O., Mf.90.

a number which was, of course, augmented by the numerous British converts who accepted a missionary role within the Church. By the early 1870s it was customary for at least fifty American missionaries to arrive annually and by the end of that decade the number usually exceeded a hundred.⁴⁸ Throughout the period there were odd years when the pattern was broken, in 1858 for example when only one missionary disembarked, but explanation may be offered, this coinciding with the war in Utah and the consequent uncertainty within the Church. The undertaking of a mission became established as an obligation which befell many Saints, yet there is no correlation between the number of missionaries set aside in any given year and the corresponding figures for baptism and recruitment. This reaffirms the theory that the early missionaries found the prospective converts awaiting them and gleaned their harvest from those dissatisfied with the established sects and denominations and actively seeking an alternative; once this labour had been undertaken, the collective success of the Church's missionaries was not so obvious as recruitment slowed down. By the end of the period, a number of those set aside in America were Saints who had accepted baptism in England and subsequently had gathered in America. Alfred Cordon

48. Manuscript History of the British Mission. An annual return for American Saints undertaking a British Mission is given. In 1879 this exceeds one hundred for the first time; in that year, 112 missionaries labouring in Britain.

may stand as example; having emigrated in 1842 he returned to undertake a mission to Leamington and Rugby six years later. ⁴⁹. In this respect also the British convert was enhancing the Church in America.

The discipline and organization of the Mormon Church which is readily exemplified in its emigration programme is also apparent in its deployment of its missionaries. The planning that was necessary to emigrate numbers of converts was also required to transport its missionaries and to oversee their missionary work in Britain. The early missionaries were able to draw upon their American experiences to supplement their faith and seemed remarkably well suited for their task. The later missionaries lacked this advantage but had proved their faith through various trials and in many instances had benefited from an educational opportunity not afforded their predecessors. They were, however, part of the same tradition of evangelical dissent which was already established before Joseph Smith received his visions. They inherited that tradition.

The undertaking of a mission was a reaffirmation of a Saint's faith. The missionaries of 1840 had consecrated their labour with

49. Alfred Cordon, Journals.

an act of worship at Far West. The circumstances surrounding later missions may not have matched the drama of the inauguration of the second apostolic mission yet in the conviction of the missionaries, they were equals. John Spiers ^{50.} of Redmarley, Worcestershire, one of the United Brethren, had been witness to the mission of 1840 and had been baptized by Woodruff. Experiencing much persecution from within his own family, he accepted Thomas Kington's counsel and gave up his employment to undertake a mission to Cheltenham. In 1843 he emigrated, walking the hundred miles from Birmingham to Liverpool where he took boat. Five years later, at Council Bluffs, he was set aside for a mission to England, receiving his authority from Brigham Young. Although he had already endured so much for his faith, he accepted his mission without equivocation and returned to the country from which, comparatively recently, he had emigrated. His doing so was a statement of conviction, of priority, and a tangible link in the chain of missionary labour. The motivation and deeds of a Worcestershire convert echoed those of eight years earlier when Wilford Woodruff had devoted his energy to the mission field and had stopped to preach at the village of Redmarley.

50. John Spiers, Reminiscences and Diary 1840-1877.

CHAPTER 5.

THE MISSION TO THE WEST MIDLANDS.

Surely the work of God has been marvellous, unparalleled perhaps in the history of any new religious movement, unparalleled in the foundation of Christian churches of any denomination, either in ancient or modern times. ^{1.}

The siting of the earliest Mormon activity in Britain had been determined by two factors, the port of entry for the initial missionaries and the location of their immediate family and friends. Thus the first phase of missionary labour had focused upon Lancashire and especially Liverpool and Preston and their respective hinterlands. Incursions of the Church into areas further afield had been occasioned by the missionaries or their converts visiting their own relations. Small and isolated pockets of Mormon influence evolved by these means in various unconnected localities in England during the first three years of the Mission; simultaneously early British converts conveyed Mormon principles and teachings from the place of their assimilation to the towns and cities that provided them with work and home. These random groupings of Saints were the embryos from which the great chain of Mormon branches and conferences was to develop, yet the process of fertilization was slow; by the spring of 1840 and the commencement of the second apostolic mission, there

1. Manuscript History of the British Mission: entry under "Gadfield Elm Conference". Wilford Woodruff commenting on the work of the Conference.

were only about four hundred members of the Church residing outside Lancashire, representing just a quarter of the total complement of British Saints. However, within the next decade this pattern of Mormon membership in Britain was to change dramatically, as the work of the Mission became more disciplined and systematic, creating a nucleus of the membership in regions outside industrial Lancashire where the Church had its origins. Other areas were now to sustain the Church through its infancy, childhood and adolescence and by doing so were to provide for its future on both sides of the Atlantic, for the British converts who became the body of the Church in this country also provided the skills, energy and impetus which ensured its development in Illinois, Missouri and ultimately Utah.

Relatively untouched by Mormonism prior to 1840, the West Midlands of England ². gradually assumed the role of the most influential of the English regions in fashioning and determining the growth of the British Mission. By 1851 attendances at Church services showed the region to have a greater number of practising Saints than any other area in England; in Britain as a whole, only the figure for Wales exceeded that of the West Midlands. Its major conferences, based upon Staffordshire, Birmingham and Herefordshire,

2. The West Midlands, as cited in this thesis, is that region of the country comprising the counties of Gloucestershire, Herefordshire, Shropshire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire and Worcestershire which were collectively classed as a separate area in the report of the 1851 Religious Census. Whilst there is some broad similarity between the above counties and the Conferences of the Church, the two should not be thought of as synonymous and corresponding.

were fundamental to the work and success of the Church nationally. It had absorbed, and responded to, the labours of the most eminent of the American missionaries and had provided from its own converts leaders of determination, charisma and foresight. The region that had given rise to the Industrial Revolution in the previous century and bore the marks of that social and economic upheaval throughout the nineteenth century, became the most successful field for the missionary labours of the Mormon Church, providing it simultaneously with converts and opposition, with supporters and detractors. Composed of both urban and rural environments, of squalor and privilege, of progress and retrogression, the West Midlands was a microcosm of the nation.

Norman Tiptaft has attested that "some of the very first Latter-Day Saint missionaries who laboured in Great Britain visited Birmingham in passing through the country from Preston and other places in the north towards Bedford, London and other places in the south of England " ³. and certainly Joseph Fielding must have followed a very circuitous route in 1837 when he visited his brother-in-law in Bedford had he avoided the West Midlands. The first significant Mormon presence in the region must, however, be accorded to an unacclaimed young lady, Mary Powel, who, as a Lancashire convert, conveyed the message of Mormonism from Manchester to Burslem, one of the pottery towns of North Staffordshire, and, among others, was

3. Norman Tiptaft, Religion in Birmingham : Birmingham, 1972, p. 72.

heard by a young Aitkenite preacher, Alfred Cordon. Denounced as a deluded woman who represented money-diggers, gypsies and fortune tellers, ⁴. Mary Powel evidently made sufficient impression upon Cordon for him to journey to Manchester to confer with other Saints living there. He was baptized in that city by David Wilding, a noted British convert, and returned to the Potteries two days later to commence the role of preacher in what was by adoption his home town. During the summer of 1839, Cordon was assisted in this work by Willard Richards and by two British Saints who had been instrumental in developing the Manchester branch, William Clayton and John Moon. Cordon's own house in Burslem was used for meetings and by late July a preaching room was opened in High Street, Burslem. Assisted principally by Clayton, Cordon converted a number of former acquaintances so that by the end of the year, when his Manchester colleagues had left, he presided over what was probably the largest branch of the Church outside Lancashire.

Among those whom Cordon converted were the shopkeeper and his wife, William and Ann Benbow ⁵. Cordon recorded that on 2nd January 1840, they "received the truth joyfully " ⁶. and two days later on the Saturday evening "they were baptized at midnight a most precious season. " Whilst the Hanley grocer and his wife would not

4. Alfred Cordon, Journals.

5. See Chapter 2, "The Founding of the British Mission : the Apostolic Missions", p.91.

6. Alfred Cordon, Journals.

have claimed any personal distinction that marked them as separate from their fellow Saints, they were later that year to enjoy a singular importance in the chronicle of the Mormon mission to the West Midlands; they were to act as catalyst and direct Wilford Woodruff to Castle Frcome, Ledbury, Herefordshire, where the most celebrated act of conversion within the history of the British Mission occurred.

Woodruff arrived in Burslem on the 21st January, just ten days after disembarking at Liverpool. He found a small branch of the Church under the presidency of Cordon whom he proclaimed "very faithful," an accolade which he extended to all the officers of the branch. He was immediately active in visiting existing members and taking every opportunity to preach. On the evening of 28th January, Woodruff conducted an act of worship at the Preaching House in Burslem where he was interrupted and confronted by the most active of the anti-Mormon faction in the pottery towns, John Jones, a Methodist preacher, who on that occasion read from the well-worn pamphlet Mormonism Unveiled, a work with which Woodruff was well acquainted. The missionary reacted with restraint and a rather condescending humour: "I helped him to read as best as I could by giving him light and water to quench his thirst, and calling for order while the house was hissing at him. When he got through, I answered him and the people retired in peace." 7.

7. Wilford Woodruff, Journals : entry for 28th January 1840.

The pottery towns of North Staffordshire encompassed a number of urban communities, linked by their dependence upon the one industry that provided for the livelihood of so many of the population, and united in their possession of the skills peculiar to that industry. Under Cordon's leadership, the Saints had taken the message of Mormonism from Burslem to other of the neighbouring towns that constituted the area: Hanley, Stoke, Lane End (Longton) and Newcastle. Complementing each other, Woodruff and Cordon were able to make weekly appointments in all of these towns and to extend their labours beyond them.

Within six months of Woodruff's arrival in the Potteries and under his forceful direction, the earlier work of Cordon had been consolidated; premises had been secured upon extended leases and Mormon meetings attracted large crowds. Moreover, the principles to which the Saints adhered were being conveyed beyond the major pottery towns and people in neighbouring villages were accepting the opportunity to listen to the American missionary and his colleagues. At this moment, when further successes and increased membership might reasonably have been anticipated, Woodruff took what appeared to be a remarkable and inexplicable decision: he announced his imminent departure. His decision to leave the branch of the Church in the Potteries at that moment was, without doubt, extraordinary, yet strangely it is in keeping with other actions taken by the early leaders of the Church: Joseph Smith had reacted to the criticism of his leadership in Kirtland by directing those nearest to him to

undertake missions, including the mission to Britain; a decade later Brigham Young was to lead the exiled Saints into an area of desert that was eventually to become the State of Utah. In both instances, the decision was presented as a response to revelation and the action was hardly that anticipated by the bulk of the Saints. It was the response of a charismatic leader who has been shown by subsequent research to have been contemplating the action that he attributed to divine communication. Woodruff's decision would appear to have been of this type.

With the departure of Woodruff, Theodore Turley was appointed to have responsibility for the missionary work in North Staffordshire; his presidency, however, was interrupted, owing to the intervention of John Jones, the Methodist adversary, upon whose instigation Turley was arrested for debt. Turley spent several weeks in Stafford prison before the charge was withdrawn without his coming to court. Initially, in prison he had lacked food but "the poor Saints of the Potteries, on learning his condition, supplied his wants, some of the sisters walking upwards of twenty miles to relieve him." 8.

In early April the second group of missionaries, set aside for the British Mission that year, disembarked at Liverpool. Amongst this number were Brigham Young and George A. Smith, both of whom were to work extensively within the West Midlands. On 14th

8. Richard L. Evans, A Century of Mormonism in Great Britain : Salt Lake City, 1937, p, 136.

of the month at a conference in Preston, areas of the mission field were allocated. George A. Smith was seconded to the Potteries, whilst Brigham Young and Wilford Woodruff were to accompany him there before continuing their journey to Hereford which had already been opened by the latter. On the day of their convention at Preston, Turley, from the confines of prison, wrote of his missionary labours in his new and enforced surroundings.

I was privileged Sunday evening last for the first time, of preaching publicly to all the prisoners of the debtors' wards. I proclaimed the gospel to them, as well as I could. The Lord had been with me in my confinement. There came into this prison last Saturday, a Baptist preacher, who used to preach in Hanley next to where we preached. He was requested to preach but he refused stating in the usual spirit that they had better hear the Latter Day Saints. With this they came to my cell, I sprang at the opportunity, and after I had done, I called publicly upon him, if he had anything to say. He replied he thought they had better retire and ponder these things over in their cells. 9.

The opportunism that had motivated Woodruff to visit John Benbow's Hill Farm, was exemplified by Turley's conduct whilst imprisoned; he responded to various of the needs of his temporary congregation, assisting with secular tasks such as reading to his fellow prisoners and helping them pen correspondence, as well as

9. Manuscript History of the British Mission : entry under "Diary of the British Mission". Letter from Theodore Turley to Willard Richards, 14th April 1840. See also Chapter 2, "The Founding of the British Mission : the Apostolic Missions," pp.95-96.

fulfilling the more traditional requirements of a missionary.

George A. Smith arrived in the Potteries on 23rd April, having journeyed from Manchester on the three horse coach, the Jolly Potter. His venue on that first evening in North Staffordshire was the Saints' meeting house in Hanley, described by Smith as "a chicken house and infested with fleas" ¹⁰. yet capable of containing two hundred persons; on this occasion "a large congregation" assembled. Although never enjoying good health, Smith now embarked upon a daily round of visiting and preaching, working largely within the six towns, but also, extending the mission field to encompass the neighbouring communities, including Newcastle-under-Lyme and Leek. Of particular significance was his conversion of the Methodist preacher and Temperance Society president, William Player, whose influence procured the use of the Temperance Hall in Longton for the Saints.

Smith was not so fortunate in procuring accommodation elsewhere. In Leek, when not preaching outdoors, his meeting place was a shed used for the twisting of silk in Compton Street, whilst his private accommodation was an ancient cottage thatched with straw, the abode of a local Saint, Job Tatton, and infested with insects, which appeared to plague Smith, whatever the location. When addressing himself to the social problems of his mission field, however, his phobia became submerged as his understanding of and sympathy for the working classes of the Potteries surfaced.

10. George A. Smith, "My Journal", 23rd April 1840, in The Instructor : July 1947, p.322.

About 70,000 persons obtain a good living when there is employment, but vast numbers are now out of work in consequence of the depression in trade and consequently in a state of starvation. I have seen more beggars here in one day than I saw in all my life in America. I never before realized the value of American institutions. One third of the earnings of the labouring classes is taken for taxes to support government in various ways. In addition to all this, duties are imposed on all the necessaries of life, making the cost of almost every article of food of double value. To all this the common people are strangers, living in other people's premises, and being obliged to pay weekly rent or decamp.

Notwithstanding their poverty many of the people are intemperate. Temperance societies have been established in different parts of the country with considerable success; yet there is room for reform. Spirit selling seems to be the best business in England; many "drink and forget their poverty." 11.

The Staffordshire Potteries Conference was organized on 29th June 1840, the various branches in the area accepting its jurisdiction and that of its first President, Alfred Cordon, who undoubtedly was the most appropriate person to be nominated for this honour; the visiting American missionaries had given an impetus to the labours of the Saints in the region but Cordon was the true founding father.

During these formative months, the Staffordshire Potteries Conference exerted an influence that far exceeded the geographical or administrative boundaries of the pottery towns and their immediate neighbours. At the quarterly meeting of the Conference, held on Christmas Day 1840, in addition to the branches of the six towns and the rest of North Staffordshire, there were present representatives

11. Manuscript History of the British Mission: entry under "Diary of the British Mission". Letter from G.A. Smith to C.C. Walker, (cousin) Ohio City, Ohio, 6th June 1840.

from Birmingham, West Bromwich, and the Cheshire Saints of Prees and Macclesfield. The position of the Potteries, a day's coach journey from Manchester and a similar distance from Birmingham, afforded the Conference a strategic centre for the development of the British Mission. As the missionary labours gradually moved south through England, the major conferences were systematically established, each at a distance of a day's journey from the next.

The Potteries Conference, therefore, whilst active within its immediate vicinity, also became a staging post for missionaries of both American and British origin, as they travelled between the areas of the Church's early success in Lancashire and the new fields of the south and west. As a result the Conference was frequently visited by both eminent American missionaries and the first generation of British missionaries who contributed energy and vigour in addition to local knowledge. One such English missionary who spent some weeks in the Potteries was Richard Rushton, who recorded his experiences of September 1840.

I have been preaching in several parts of the Potteries. I have preached three Sabbath days successfully at Lane End and baptized one young woman. I had the pleasure of meeting with Elder David Wilding while I was in the Potteries and enjoyed his company. A few nights since I opened a meeting in Leek Market Place. Brother Hawthorn from Burslem preached the first principles, and before we could conclude the people turned three large dogs on us, which, however, did us no harm. Elder Cordon returned from West Bromwich last week, came to Leek last Sunday,

and ordained me an Elder, he afterwards preached in Leek Market Place to a large assembly who paid great attention to what he said. There is a good deal of excitement in the town and a good deal of persecution. 12.

The Saints of the Staffordshire Conference experienced the ordeal of opposition and persecution which befell the membership of all conferences. Verbal intimidation was often accompanied by the threat of physical assault or that of damage to halls and meeting places utilized by the Church. As early as February 1840, Woodruff had described the Potteries as "a seat of iniquity and priestcraft" and, whilst there is no evidence of an orchestrated opposition to the Saints, there were many instances of their being opposed with a vehemence that could hardly accord with Christian brotherhood. At Newcastle-under-Lyme the Revd. Robert Brown informed Woodruff that he "should go to the bottom less pit" as would all who followed him; 13. a blind preacher, a Methodist named Repton, challenged Smith by interrupting meetings and proclaiming that the only authority was the Bible and thus the Book of Mormon was a blasphemy; 14. in Hanley, as elsewhere, violence was perpetrated upon worshipping Saints, Smith reporting that "the rabble broke in the windows near my head with stones, thinking to hit me with them". 15. One of the more poignant anecdotes, however, was provided by the funeral of

12. Manuscript History of the British Mission : entry under "Staffordshire Conference". Report from Richard Rushton, 9th September 1840.

13. Wilford Woodruff, Journals : entry for 19th February 1840.

14. George A. Smith, Op. cit. : p. 365.

15. Manuscript History of the British Mission : entry under "Burslem Branch". G.A. Smith, 5th December 1840.

Jonathon Locket, an impoverished Saint of the Staffordshire Conference, who had demonstrated his loyalty and determination by walking from Stoke to Stafford to provide for Theodore Turley during his imprisonment in Stafford Prison. Locket had died without leaving sufficient means to provide for his burial, which was therefore financed by a subscription to which many of his fellow Saints contributed. At the actual burial, whilst the corpse was at the grave-side, the service was interrupted as a local clergyman, Dr. Vale, insisted on being shown the registrar's certificate and refused to accept the word of the clerk who had issued it. Not until the document was provided, was the body permitted to be placed in its final abode. Even in death an insult could be inflicted and yet the funeral "excited a good deal of curiosity that such a poor man should have so many friends." 16.

In common with other of the American missionaries who were set aside in 1840, George A. Smith's mission lasted approximately one year, the majority of which time he spent in North Staffordshire. In the summer of that year he did assist Woodruff in Herefordshire and joined Brigham Young in London; both labours, however, encompassed a relatively short period of time. He suffered throughout from ill health - at one point Willard Richards argued that Smith should not

16. G.A. Smith, Op. cit. : p.415.

join the mission in Herefordshire : "it require tough men here and not a chance to rest." 17. Moreover, the Saints in the Potteries were so poor that Smith was unable to send any money to Montrose, Iowa, for the support of his father. 18. At the end of his mission in April 1841 he reflected on the twelve months of his labour, in a letter to Parley P. Pratt summarizing his achievements and emotions.

I landed in Liverpool on the 6th April, 1840, and after attending the Preston conference I went to the Staffordshire Patteries, where there were about 100 Saints. I remained there 3 months. The work continued to prosper and 80 were added to the Church during that time. I then left the Church there in the care of Elder Alfred Cordon, and in company with Elders Heber C. Kimball and Wilford Woodruff visited the Churches in Herefordshire and vicinity. Hundreds received our testimony and were baptized. From thence we proceeded to London. My health being poor I was counseled by the brethren of the Twelve Apostles to return to my former field of labour in Staffordshire which I did, leaving in London but 11 members. Since that time my labours have been chiefly confined to the limits of the Staffordshire Conference which has, until lately, included Birmingham and Macclesfield containing 18 branches of the Church, 580 members have been added since the time I commenced my labouring there. Many have been called to the ministry who are faithful men and willing to receive counsel. Although I have suffered much bodily affliction during the past year, the Lord has blessed my labors abundantly, and I can say I never enjoyed myself better in the discharge of my duty than I have on this mission. 19.

17. Manuscript History of the British Mission : entry under "Diary of the British Mission". Letter from Willard Richards to G.A. Smith, 15th May 1840.
18. Manuscript History of the British Mission: entry under "Diary of the British Mission". Letter from G.A. Smith to his father, 3rd August 1840.
19. Manuscript History of the British Mission : entry under "Staffordshire Conference". Letter from G.A. Smith to P.P. Pratt, 11th April 1841.

It is tempting to trace the relative importance or decline of the British conferences from the publication of their membership figures, but without much qualification these returns are misleading. This does not question their accuracy, for the Mormon Church was noted for the scrupulous manner in which it collated its statistics; rather it pertains to the continuously changing composition of the respective conferences, since, largely for administrative reasons, branches were frequently transferred from one conference to another and, in a number of instances, conferences were amalgamated. On his arrival in the Potteries, George A. Smith had found a membership of approximately one hundred Saints; nine months later the Conference claimed a total of 502 persons. Whilst the Staffordshire Conference was of immense importance to the development of the Church nationally, such a harvest of converts within a limited location might well be construed as miraculous. As has been noted, however, the Staffordshire Conference by the end of 1840 maintained branches in Birmingham and surrounding towns and also encompassed part of Cheshire and much of Shropshire. In the return for the first quarter of the following year, the importance of these areas became evident; membership in Birmingham exceeded one hundred while Macclesfield was only marginally short of this number. The Conference had also annexed part of Derbyshire, since a branch at Chesterfield was reported. By the second quarter of 1841, however, Birmingham had become a separate conference and one might, therefore, expect a corresponding decline in the membership of the Staffordshire Conference; this, however, does not occur, as

the Conference had extended its influence to the north and recorded new branches at Doncaster and Sheffield. The conclusion is self-evident: membership numbers must be read with much caution and dramatic changes in these figures should not be related to growth or decline within a narrowly defined area.

The evolution in the size and shape of the Staffordshire Conference is, however, of some significance for it was the archetypal model of the development and extension of Mormon influence through its system of branches and conferences. From a given centre, a conference, lines of development radiated outwards so that a type of linear growth occurred along each of these lines; at a certain point during this process, a new conference was created out of a successful branch, and the pattern recommenced. The network of branches and conferences encouraged the spatial diffusion of Mormon teachings; they also provided hospitality to the Church's missionaries on the journey from one conference to the next; in turn the missionaries sustained and encouraged the branches through which they passed. Itinerancy was therefore expected of the Church's preachers who received sustenance and accommodation whilst en route and who were expected to give an impetus to those Saints who provided for their needs. Mormon missionaries, more so than their counterparts in other sects and denominations, therefore, accepted the condition of itinerancy as one aspect of their labour.

The euphoria of the early 1840s, created by the infusion of American missionaries and especially the Apostles, was losing its influence within the Staffordshire Conference by the middle years of the decade. The Conference had lost the authority of the eminent missionaries. Additionally, many of its leading converts had responded to the principle of the gathering; Alfred Cordon's emigration in 1844 left a void, for he had given stability to the management and leadership of the Conference since its founding. Others who had not been able to arrange their emigration were unsettled and frustrated. By November 1844, the President of the British Mission, Reuben Hedlock had twice found it necessary to visit the Conference to "settle difficulties". 20. The following year at the annual conference of the Mission in Manchester, Elder George Simpson of the Staffordshire Conference informed the gathering that "there was not that union in the Conference that was necessary for the well being of the Church and he hoped that the presiding brethren would take this Conference under their consideration and that measures might be taken for their assistance." 21. The General Conference responded by seconding an American missionary, Hiram Clark, as President of the Staffordshire Conference; in August he reported on his labour and findings.

20. Manuscript History of the British Mission : entry under "Staffordshire Conference". Report of Reuben Hedlock, 18th November 1844.

21. Manuscript History of the British Mission : entry under "Staffordshire Conference". Report of George Simpson, 6th April 1845.

Having taken coach May 1st at half past Nine o' clock for the Staffordshire Potteries, the field of my labour for the time being, as President over the Staffordshire Conference, agreeable to the general appointment by the general conference at Manchester, we arrived in Hanley the same day, took lodgings with Brother Thomas Yeomans, where they showed us every kindness possible, for which I pray the Lord to bless them temporally and spiritually. After tarrying a few days in Hanley and Burslem, I took a trip out to the different branches of the conference, which took me about six weeks to get round them all. In some places I found them in a rather look-warm state, and some of the members seldom or never attending meetings. I exhorted them to meet oftener together and, as the Apostle said "not to forget the assembling of themselves together, as the manner of some was," for in so doing, I told them they would lose the spirit and power of truth. When I first came here there seemed to be an unfriendly spirit in the minds of many of the Saints, but I believe it is mostly gone, with the exception of showing itself now and then with a few. We have had in some cases to cut off dead branches, to give room for others to be adopted in; so that on the whole, I have not been altogether idle since I came here. I have baptized three new ones and one that had been cut off, which makes four, since our last quarterly conference, and I now say that the spirit of reconciliation seems to prevail with the Saints at present, whilst the spirit of love and union attends our meetings and the hearts of the Saints rejoice in their assemblies. 22.

During the early days of Clark's presidency, Wilford Woodruff, undertaking his second mission to Britain, returned to the field of his former labours, renewing old acquaintances. He was "much edified to hear the testimony of the Saints," some of whom "confessed they had been out of the way in some things" but in the presence of Woodruff repented, "wished to be forgiven and felt a determination to be faithful hereafter and maintain the work of the Lord." 23. For a

22. Millennial Star: Vol 6, 15th August 1845.

23. Wilford Woodruff, Journals: entry 8th July 1845.

period there appeared to be a renewed vigour within the Conference, the Saints responding to the inspiration of Woodruff and the authority of Clark; penny collections were undertaken throughout the district for the upkeep of the Church in America and there was less reserve about the paying of tithes. Within the Potteries, the Saints secured the Temperance Hall, Pitt Street, Burslem, an arrangement which gave them a certain respectability whilst providing accommodation for the total membership of the Saints within the vicinity. Conference membership stabilized at approximately 350. Missionary work was undertaken in the outlying areas and a new branch was established at Newport, providing for that town and the surrounding rural communities. The Newport Branch, however, remained small in membership and was under a constant state of siege from the clergy of the Church of England, who succeeded in closing the two preaching rooms that the Saints opened in the town; by late 1848 the branch numbered only eleven.

Statistically there was a marked increase in the membership of the Staffordshire Conference at the commencement of the 1850s but this did not signify a Mormon revival in the region; rather it reflected the annexation of the Macclesfield Conference at the beginning of the decade. Thereafter membership went into decline and internal dispute further weakened the Conference. In 1845, President Osman M. Deuel, another American missionary, reported upon the first six months of his presidency. He had found the Conference in a poor condition, little confidence being shown in the priesthood. Many of the officers of the Conference, members of

the Church since the mission of 1840, now manifested an apparent complacency, challenging the authority of the Church and its representatives. The spirit of co-operation and the sharing of experiences was no longer evidenced in the actions of many of the Saints, who were "at sword's point with all the authorities." 24. Deuel claimed to have restored unanimity in the priesthood and to have reinstated a "proper feeling" within the Conference but the signs of discord, disharmony and even disenchantment were by this time recurring too frequently for an optimistic view of the Conference's future to be held.

One major problem was the advanced age of many of the members. They had joined the Church during its infancy, responded to the emotional appeal of its teachings, anticipated the spiritual and secular salvation that was offered by the principle of the gathering but, for many different reasons, had not participated in the emigration programme. They had witnessed younger, buoyant members of their families commence the journey to Zion, they had seen their respective branches lose Saints who had provided leadership and inspiration; with the passing of years and an increasing sense of isolation within a community, it had become difficult to sustain a faith that was continually ridiculed and attacked by non-Mormons. In September 1859, Elder John Clarke reported the Potteries as "an old Conference" which contained "a great number of old members not able to meet in such crowds as the Birmingham Saints. They are in a

24. Millennial Star : Vol. 16, 26th June 1854.

scattered state and have to walk several miles to their meeting room. The Traveling Elders resort to fireside teaching." 25.

The emigration of the progressive, the skilled, the creative and the energetic was the salvation of the Church in America but in Britain it had unavoidable consequences.

The opening years of the 1860s saw the Conference membership well below 200 and the rapid succession of American Presidents can have contributed little to its stability or the confidence of its members. In 1862, however, William Hopwood acceded to the office. Within a year membership had nearly doubled and he could describe the Conference as "being in a better condition than it has been for some time past." 26. In the first quarter of 1863 alone, over forty converts were baptized and it was anticipated that approximately the same number would emigrate from the Conference that year to the Salt Lake Valley. Hopwood, however, was a realist when confronted by the problems posed by the nature and composition of the Conference and by the antagonism of the Established Church within the rural communities.

There has been much opposition to the spread of the Gospel in this Conference for many years. The Ministers of the Established Church, having influence with the farmers and landowners, exercise great power over the people. Many who are not numbered with us say they

25. Manuscript History of the British Mission : entry under "Staffordshire Conference". Report of John Clarke, 4th September 1859.

26. Millennial Star : Vol. 25, 15th March 1863.

believe in the principles we preach, but they are afraid to join the Church, for by so doing, they would lose their works, and perhaps be turned out of house and home, which had been the case with some that have loosed the fetters which bound them, to worship God according to their own consciences. 27.

Under Hopwood's presidency, a new energy appears to have been released within the Conference: membership remained healthy and a number of outdoor campaigns were undertaken. This, however, was to be the final renaissance for the Staffordshire Conference, for within two years of his returning to America, membership had again declined below two hundred. Certainly there was still much work undertaken, such as the extended series of meetings in Market Drayton during the summer of 1865 when the Saints "met with considerable persecution but felt good had been accomplished." 28. William Gregg, who had been sustained as President in that summer, referred to this in his annual report.

The Conference extended over a large tract of country and numbered 196 members. During the past year 25 had been baptized and the labours of that year had been to him the most pleasant period of his life. He and his brethren had laboured energetically in out-door preaching, principally in the villages of Shropshire. The people, however, were bound down under the influence of the clergymen; and in several cases where the Elders had been encouraged in their visits, the ministers had warned the people that if they persisted in so doing, they would be turned out of their houses and lose their employment. Still the people were favourable and in many instances had contributed to the support of the Elders. A great deal of preaching had been done in the Conference in the year past, and in some places the

27. Millennial Star : Vol. 24, 14th June 1862.

28. Millennial Star : Vol. 27, 4th June 1865.

inhabitants had grown very hard-hearted, scorning the offers of mercy given and the truths proclaimed by the Elders. In consequence of this some of them had been visited with heavy calamities and judgements. In one village - Market Drayton - the inhabitants of which had persecuted the servants of God very much in times past, seven hundred head of cattle had died during the past few months by the murrain or cattle plague now raging throughout the country. Only one man who owned cattle in that place had escaped such visitation and he was a Latter Day Saint. The people felt there was a gloomy cloud hanging over them, and some of them had expressed a wish to him to gather to Zion, as they really feared the judgements of God were close at hand. As for himself, when he embraced the Gospel, he was almost an infidel as to religious truths, but he now knew that this was the Church and Kingdom of God, and prayed that the Lord might enable all who had embraced the principles of the Gospel to keep faith in their covenants. 29.

The Staffordshire Conference maintained a separate identity for just a further three years. In 1869 with membership below one hundred and fifty, and with only six branches, yet encompassing a very large area of both Staffordshire and Shropshire, the Church determined to close the Conference and divide its branches between the two larger conferences of Manchester and Birmingham; this was implemented on 1st July. The Conference that had been vital to the early work of the British Mission, became victim of its own earlier success and was annexed, in part to Manchester, from which the missionaries had travelled to open up the Potteries of Staffordshire, and Birmingham, a conference which owed its origin to the Saints of North Staffordshire, many of whom had laboured in the Black Country of the Midlands. Within the annals of British industrial and social

29. Millennial Star : Vol. 28, 7th January 1866.

history, the Potteries attains a unique position; the same may be said of its role in the growth and development of the British Mission of the Mormon Church.

As has been noted, conferences did not restrict their constituent branches to those residing within the boundaries of the county from which they took their name. The lines of development which radiated outwards from the Potteries made incursions into various other counties and at the height of the Conference's influence extended as far as Sheffield and Doncaster. Of the adjacent counties, however, Shropshire was most closely linked with the Staffordshire Conference, which at its inception claimed one Shropshire based branch, that of Prees. Its origin dates from the spring of 1840 when Wilford Woodruff, Alfred Cordon and George A. Smith first took the Mormon message into those rural communities within a day's walk of the Potteries; of the various Shropshire branches, Prees was the oldest. It also lay on the extreme perimeter of the area extending from Manchester and was closely linked with the branch at Audlem, Cheshire, which was its nearest neighbour. A Lancashire missionary, Joseph White, reported his labours in this vicinity in November 1840 and quite clearly he had visited the area at an earlier date.

The last time I wrote to you it was rather a melancholy story; but I thank the Lord that he has blessed us abundantly of late. When we first set off upon our mission we had to lodge in fields, but now the Lord

is blessing us with the blessings of heaven and of earth. There is a very large field for the gospel in this region of the country. We have baptized five persons this last week, and two more are coming forward in another neighbourhood this evening. There are many more who believe in the truth, in this region of the country. The work has just commenced here, but it is making rapid progress. 30.

The isolated nature of many of Shropshire's communities posed very real problems for the missionary Saints, for the county did not assist the spatial diffusion of the sect's teaching as occurred in the industrial Midlands, it did not enjoy the concentration and co-ordination associated with other areas. Branch records delineate the difficulties which faced the early missionaries and suggest that the 1840s witnessed a number of campaigns in individual towns and villages but experienced little by way of a co-ordinated plan. The Millennial Star cites Henry Royle of the Manchester Conference as one of the earliest missionaries to have laboured in Shropshire and records his work in Ellesmere and Shrewsbury in 1844. 31. However, the Journal of a young watch-maker, who had moved from Ipstones, near Leek, with his master to work in Shropshire, is evidence that the Saints had met with greater success at the beginning of the decade, than is usually ascribed to them. 32.

30. Millennial Star : Vol. 1, December 1840.

31. Millennial Star : Vol. 10, 1st June 1848.

32. Charles Smith, Journal: C.H.O., Msd. 1912.

Charles Smith pursued his trade at Ellesmere where he received counsel from his mother, during a visit, that he should associate himself with a religious body. Giving thought to this advice, he rejected the various non-conformist churches, and determined to listen to the Latter-Day Saints who were visiting Ellesmere in the summer of 1840. Evidently their campaign attracted sufficient attention for the Primitive Methodists to engage a speaker, Hamnsend by name, to denounce them. Spurning "the many wonderful tales against the sect," Smith offered himself for baptism and became a Saint on 13th December 1840. Early in the following year, having been ordained a priest, he accompanied Henry Royle on his missionary travels. Collectively they attempted to open houses in Shrewsbury, Ironbridge, Bridgnorth, Wellington, Wem and Whitchurch but they met with little success and so returned to Ellesmere and Oswestry where they laboured with Elder F. Cook and Priest James Cook. In this vicinity, including the villages of Lightwood Green and Pool Quay, there was evidently a considerable presence of Latter-Day Saints at a very early date in the development of the British Mission. Whilst not numerically as substantial as the Potteries branch or the newly emerging branch in Birmingham, and therefore tending to be overlooked, the record of the Saints in Ellesmere and adjacent settlements is evidence of the extent to which Mormon influence had developed within a relatively short period of time. The planned emigration of a party of Saints from Lightwood Green in January 1842 substantiates this and the narrative of Smith's Journal evidences the level of hostility that the Mormons

were encountering by this date. On 27th of that month the Saints who were about to commence their emigration met at the house of William Cross to consecrate their journey. Those who opposed were evidently cognizant of the Saint's plans, for a crowd surrounded the house and a situation akin to a siege developed. Mormons within the house were struck by a variety of missiles thrown through the windows. Finally, violence was met by the threat of further violence: Joseph Horton, the son-in-law of Cross, but not a Mormon himself, loaded a firearm which he discharged in order to frighten the assailants who then retreated. 33. The Saints concluded their meeting and the emigration was blessed.

The establishing of Church branches in Shropshire during the 1840s lacked the systematic planning and cohesion that was evidenced elsewhere within the West Midlands. Missionary labours, whilst directed from established conferences, specifically the Potteries, Manchester and Liverpool, were individual rather than collective, the work of the truly itinerant preacher of whom Henry Royle may stand as representative. The result was that isolated communities of Saints developed in certain locations, forming themselves into small branches, vulnerable to external pressures and persecution. Conservative, rural interests directed the lives of the working classes; membership of the Mormon Church could jeopardize both employment and home. The early successes at Lightwood Green and Pool Quay are, then, remarkable, testimony

33. Ibid.

to the influence and ardour of the missionary and the determination and faith of the converts but within the chronicle of the Shropshire mission they are an exception rather than the norm. The latter was to be found in market towns such as Bridgnorth, which in 1848 had a membership of eight, Market Drayton, which in the same year claimed eleven members, and Prees, the report of which in 1847 indicated sixteen members, although six were in "doubtful standing".³⁴. Low membership apart, these branches held one other factor in common: all were within an easy day's journey of active centres of Mormon influence, Bridgnorth being some twelve miles from Wolverhampton, whilst Prees and Market Drayton were a similar distance from the Staffordshire Potteries. They were, therefore, visited by eminent missionaries and elders by whom they were supported if not entirely sustained. In his desire to extend the influence of the Potteries Conference, Alfred Cordon had suggested early in 1841 that a quarterly conference should be held in Prees rather than Stoke, presumably to stimulate additional interest in that rural location.³⁵. In the same year he had debated at the Wesleyan Chapel in Market Drayton with its minister the veracity of the Book of Mormon, being accompanied and supported by Osmond Shaw, a Potteries convert, the son of Simeon Shaw, the Staffordshire historian and co-founder of the Potteries Mechanics' Institute. Cordon and his colleagues were conveying their message to the perimeter of the sphere of influence of the respective conferences; their visits, however, were forays

34. Manuscript History of the British Mission : entry under "Prees Branch".

35. Alfred Cordon, Journals.

rather than sustained missionary activity; lines of development did not proceed beyond these towns to other areas of Mormon influence.

Henry Royle was succeeded by Thomas Thomas, a British missionary attached to the Liverpool Conference, which throughout the 1840s assumed responsibility for most of the county of Shropshire. Thomas concentrated much of his labour within the county town of Shrewsbury, where during the summer of 1847 he organized and led a series of outdoor meetings which, the Church claimed, attracted many hearers. His most valuable service, however, was the securing of a meeting room in the town, for which he negotiated terms with a local Methodist. The establishing of a base in Shrewsbury gave a focal point to the mission's activities within Shropshire; from here preachers would be commissioned to visit rural branches, whilst within the county town itself a more extensive missionary programme could be undertaken. The value of the leased premises was illustrated on Good Friday afternoon 1848 when nearly one hundred Saints from Shrewsbury and other branches within travelling distance, notably Ellesmere and Pool Quay, assembled in the presence of Orson Spencer for a tea meeting. ³⁶. The embryo from which the Shropshire Conference was to be born two years later was conceived in these acts of communion which were made possible by the foresight of unsung missionaries such as Thomas.

36. Millennial Star : Vol. 10, 1st June 1848.

Shropshire achieved the status of a conference on 5th October 1850 when the General Conference of the British Mission detached five branches from the Liverpool Conference - Asterley, Montgomery, Lightwood Green, Llanymanach and Pool Quay - three branches from Staffordshire - Whitchurch, Prees and Market Drayton - and Newtown from the Welsh Conference. ³⁷. At the end of that year it claimed a membership of 182 which had risen by nearly a hundred within twelve months. These figures challenge the validity of the 1851 Census which lists only two returns for Shropshire and indicates that at the most popular service, the evening service, only 78 Saints were at worship. The rural nature of their branches and particularly their use of members' houses or private rooms for communal worship denied the Census the opportunity of being truly representative and is example of the conservative nature of the Census' returns for the Latter-Day Saints.

In total the Shropshire Conference spanned just twelve years from its commencement to its amalgamation. Its membership returns indicate that it experienced three quite distinct phases: from 1850 to 1854 it enjoyed growth and stability; within the period 1855 to 1857 a marked decline in conference membership was witnessed, the number of converts declining from 241 to 80; between 1858 and 1862 the conference neither grew nor declined, membership hovering just below one hundred. It is the middle of the three phases that requires explanation.

37. Manuscript History of the British Mission : entry under "Shropshire Conference".

The decline in conference membership coincided with the decrease in Church membership nationally, which in part can be explained by the lack of stability in the Church in Utah brought about by the Mormon War, and the consequent halting of its missionary programme and the cessation of emigration for British Saints. 38. However, whilst this may account for the trend in membership over a period of years, it advances no satisfactory explanation for the scale and rapidity of the decline experienced by the Shropshire Conference; other factors must have influenced this movement.

During the first four years of the 1850s, the Latter-Day Saints had enjoyed a considerable success in Shropshire and particularly in Shrewsbury itself. They had developed the foundation created by Royle and Thomas, they had consolidated their membership and the acquisition of accommodation had provided the sense of legitimacy and nearly respectability. In November 1854, Elder Sylvester H. Earl was able to report that "a number of lively camp meetings had been recently held in the Conference, and were apparently doing much good. Quite a number of individuals have been lately baptized, and several persons in the country villages had opened their houses for preaching". 39. In this year the Shropshire membership peaked at 241 and throughout the Conference a sense of confidence may be detected. Increased membership, however, purveys its own difficulties; no longer were those who sought to lead and direct public opinion confronting a handful of deluded

38. See Chapter 3, "The Mission Develops," pp.129-130.

39. Millennial Star : Vol. 16, 4th November 1854.

rustics, but rather the activities and numerical strength of the Saints affronted their beliefs and challenged their positions. In America the assaults and persecution directed against the Saints had coincided with their becoming a recognizable body, sufficient in number to exercise an influence upon respective communities; the rural county of Shropshire was likewise not immune from this reaction. Opposition and antagonism to the Mormons grew in intensity throughout 1854; the Saints were reported as not daring to meet for fear of their safety. One meeting in the house of Henry Humphries, a Shropshire convert, was disturbed by a mob numbering two to three hundred, some of whom attempted to enter the house. In the court case that ensued "the bench declined to interfere."⁴⁰ In a report to the Millennial Star Sylvester Earl referred to the "spirit of mobocracy" when describing a meeting of the Saints in Shrewsbury on 24th September 1854. "During the meeting the mob gathered and swore they would enter the hall. The brethren applied to the police, who went to the place as requested, quelled the mob, staid during the services, and stated that at any time protection was wanted, it would be given on application."⁴¹

For the Shropshire Saints 1854 was a robust year, as those antagonistic to the Church gave expression to their feelings often in ways which conflicted with the law. One incident, in particular, achieved a notoriety, as much for the manner in which the local press reported it as for the assault which occasioned the summons.

40. Eddowes's Shrewsbury Journal : 1st February 1854.

41. Millennial Star : Vol. 16, 21st October 1854.

In attempting to leave a tract at the home of Francis Steadman, a surgeon of Park Road, Wellington, Thomas Williams, a local convert, was assaulted by the surgeon.^{42.} The Shropshire Conservative elevated Steadman to heroic stature and opened a subscription to pay his fine and costs; Williams, it styled "a thing" and made comparisons with "the most atrocious felon."^{43.}

The conviction of the Shropshire Saints must have been sorely tried during this period: in the most rural of English counties they were physically threatened whilst at their worship and verbally abused in the editorial comment of the local press; their sacred texts were publicly vilified, their tracts were received with contempt, the judiciary adopted leniency to those who assaulted them, the public subscribed to aid the aggressor; simultaneously both home and workplace were in jeopardy. Whilst all conferences had experienced the aggression of opposition by 1854, that which confronted the Saints in Shropshire was well orchestrated and comprehensive, affording little respite to Church members. To those who defected in the face of fear, must be added the many who emigrated, for this period was one of active emigration for British converts and the Shropshire Saints responded to the doctrine of the gathering in an identical manner to their brothers and sisters elsewhere in the British Mission: rural branches particularly

42. For a detailed account of this incident see Chapter 7. "Opposition and Persecution," pp.335-339. The case is recounted in full in Eddowes's Shrewsbury Journal: 15th March 1854.

43. Millennial Star : Vol. 16, 1st April 1854.

were decimated by the success of the emigration programme. The Church itself also played a role in accelerating the decline of the Conference, for, recognizing the uncertainty or tardiness of certain of its members, it embarked on its own cleansing operation which resulted in the excommunication of many, its "trimming off dry branches," as it expressed its undertaking, in the hope that "an increase of diligence in the performance of duties with the faithful" ⁴⁴ would ensue. No simplistic reason to explain the decline of the Shropshire Conference can be advanced; the factors that influenced it were numerous and varied. However, the rapidity with which membership declined was extraordinary but so were the influences upon the Conference during the period. The social and economic conditions which confronted the Saints, and especially the hostility they were forced to experience, possessed an intensity which did not pertain throughout the British Mission; the Shropshire Conference may not have been unique but it did undergo a transformation between 1855 and 1857 more startling than any associated with other conferences, a transformation from which it was never to recover.

With the decline in conference membership, branches closed. At the height of its activities and membership in 1854 it administered and sustained eleven branches; seven years later,

44. Millennial Star : Vol. 18, 18th January 1856.

there remained just three. Elder William Budge, writing in 1859, described the Conference as "a very small one, numbering only 60 or 70 members" and admitted that "there were difficulties that could not be prevented in the early part of the year." 45. Within three years Shropshire forfeited its autonomy, and joined the Staffordshire Conference, from which three of the founding branches had originated.

There is a temptation to concentrate upon the more successful conferences, where membership flourished, future leaders of the Church on both sides of the Atlantic emerged, and where the eminent American missionaries devoted most of their labour; the West Midlands provides the best examples of such conferences within the British Mission. No less, however, does the Shropshire Conference deserve its place in the story, for its missionaries and Saints were forced to contend with adversity, hardships, opposition and frustrations that give a perspective to their labours and their achievements. Shropshire illustrates the problems of a conference attempting to cope with a dispersed community in a rural area, initially without the benefit of an established base and subsequently with that base, Shrewsbury, suffering from intense opposition that threatened the membership physically, psychologically and economically. In the outlying branches the distances between communities made the Saints particularly vulnerable, owing to their isolation from the support of other branches. Likewise, the Shropshire Saints

45. Manuscript History of the British Mission : entry under "Shropshire Conference".

were not provided with the sense of belonging to an international Church in the way that urban Saints appear to have been; difficulties and communications encouraged few visits from noted leaders either of other conferences or those undertaking missions; the Mormon method of spatial diffusion, noted elsewhere in the Mission, did not apply to Shropshire.

The Shropshire Conference, however, exemplifies the interdependence of the British conferences and specifically of the relatively undeveloped upon stronger and better organized conferences. Interestingly, the Shropshire Conference supports the argument that opposition to a church or sect that challenges the established orthodoxy is in proportion to the success and membership claimed by the new organization.

The metaphor of frontier and pioneer religion has been applied to the developing industrial centres of England, in the belief that they approximate to the American frontier. The saga of the Shropshire Conference permits an equating of the missionary work in rural England and the American pioneering experience. Continuing the analogy, the frontiersmen were Henry Royle, Thomas Thomas and their colleagues who laboured to open up this new land, depending largely on their own resources and facing considerable hostility. The Mormon Church bestowed this mantle upon relatively inexperienced and certainly unacclaimed British converts whose labours rank with those of the most distinguished Mormon missionaries and should be interpreted

as among the successes of the British Mission. The work of the Shropshire Conference should not be judged by its life-span; given the variables that affected it, its demise was inevitable and its annexation administratively sound. The pioneering attributes of those who laboured within this particular field illustrate the same faith, perseverance and charisma as the apostolic missionaries themselves.

No greater contrast exists within the conferences of the British Mission than that between Shropshire and one of its close neighbours, Birmingham, the latter developing into numerically the strongest and, arguably, the most influential conference within the British Isles. In a letter to William Clayton, dated 28th January 1840, seven days after his arrival in the Staffordshire Potteries, Wilford Woodruff observed, "I feel as though the spirit will soon send one of us to Birmingham." ⁴⁶. The next day witnessed the departure of Theodore Turley to his native city and his unproductive reunion with his parents. However, as the Staffordshire Conference to the north was consolidated and the initial converts were made in Herefordshire and Gloucestershire to the south, Mormon attention was redirected upon Birmingham. Grets Green, a community just three miles north-west of the city, was visited by John Cheese, formerly a preacher with the United Brethren in Herefordshire, who on 17th May 1840 performed the first service of baptism in the region, Joseph

46. Manuscript History of the British Mission : entry under "Birmingham Conference".

Evans and Thomas Saunders offering themselves for this ordinance.⁴⁷ The Church accepted the opportunity afforded by Cheese's labours and commenced directing its missionaries to Birmingham and its neighbouring communities: within days of the baptisms, Wilford Woodruff and Willard Richards visited and preached at Grets Green: William Clayton and John Needham were appointed to labour in the vicinity of Birmingham; a number of visiting missionaries, including Alfred Cordon and John Bourne, were sent from the Staffordshire Conference; Lorenzo Snow, an American missionary, was set aside to labour in the city.

Theodore Turley, the founding father of the Birmingham Conference, devoted much of his early labour to Grets Green and West Bromwich; from the former he reported in June 1840.

All the time I have been here, there have been either preachers or leaders calling upon me, some in the spirit of enquiry, others to try and eat me up. It is hard fighting.

On Saturday I was invited to the house of a gentleman at Hill Top; I had an interview with him. He received me with warmth, received my testimony, said he had tried to preach the gospel for thirty five years, but was convinced that he lacked the power of God, and he had preached the second coming of Christ and the Restoration of the Jews; he had suffered much opposition on account of his going to try for me to preach in their chapel. Sunday - In the afternoon preached in the street and at night I was invited to fill the appointment of a Methodist local preacher. The house was filled and I preached two

47. Manuscript History of the British Mission : entry under "Birmingham Conference".

hours; many believe. Numbers say they must be baptized. The preacher stated publicly that he must be baptized; prayed that God would enable them all to examine the truths they had heard, and obey them. He and his wife have told me they will obey the command. A great fuss was raised. I have no chance to visit the different places around. I pray God to send more labourers in the vineyard. Brother Smith, do come and help me here. There is Birmingham and Wolverhampton and other towns here that are perishing. 48.

From these initial successes in Grets Green and West Bromwich, the impetus took the missionaries into the other towns of the "Black Country" : Needham laboured in Albury, Dudley, Hill Top and Darlaston, whilst John Bourne addressed meetings at Oldbury and Wednesbury. At the former Bourne attended a service in a Methodist Chapel at which the minister invited his congregation to testify to their personal experiences of religion, Bourne being ordered to sit down following his testimony to Mormonism; at Wednesbury he recorded preaching to a large audience, most of whom were Roman Catholic. 49. The Baptist Chapel at Wednesbury was made available to Turley on two occasions in June, on the second of which he had to contend with vociferous opposition, certain of which threatened "to horsewip me and others thretining to put me down a cole pit" 50. At Bilston, Lorenzo Snow delivered a lecture "to a very respectable audience which was made up principally of socialists." 51.

48. Manuscript History of the British Mission : entry under "Diary of the British Mission". Letter from Theodore Turley to G.A. Smith, 8th June 1840.

49. John Bourne, Reminiscences.

50. Theodore Turley, Reminiscences and Diary.

51. Manuscript History of the British Mission : entry under "Bilston Branch".

As the missionaries collectively extended their influence from Grets Green and West Bromwich to neighbouring towns, the response to the Church in the City of Birmingham remained disappointing throughout 1840. In October, at the General Conference in Manchester, Alfred Cordon reported Birmingham to have just four members. During November, Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball added their weight and influence to the mission, yet growth continued to be associated with the smaller communities rather than with the city itself. By the end of the year, Grets Green claimed 40 members, West Bromwich 21, whilst the return for Birmingham was 16.

The second most important industrial centre of the "Black Country", Wolverhampton, some ten miles to the north of Birmingham, was equally unsupportive of the initial incursions of the missionaries. Lorenzo Snow, who laboured in the town in November 1840 was met with indifference rather than hostility. He was, however, afforded, hospitality by one of the curious who attended his meetings, Mr. Farmer, who "possesses considerable influence among the learned of the town." 52. Farmer's influence extended to his arranging the use of the Baptist Chapel for Snow's meetings, the missionary observing of the Baptists that this was "to their horror!" Throughout these difficult months of his mission, Snow retained a sense of perspective and of humour, which must have sustained him and others when faced with apparent

52. Manuscript History of the British Mission : entry under "Diary of the British Mission.", Letter from Lorenzo Snow to G.A. Smith, 28th November 1840.

failure. Thus he observed that in February 1841, Farmer travelled, at his own request, to Grets Green to be baptized "in a pure running stream, preferring the trouble of this journey to being baptized in a canal." 53. He balanced this, however, with considerable realism, when reflecting upon his task.

I have just returned from Wolverhampton. The work there still moves, but slow and I cannot but believe that a great and mighty work eventually will be performed in that town. But I am quite sensible that much diligence, prayer, faith and perseverance will necessarily require to be exercised. At times the prospects there certainly have presented quite a gloomy aspect; something, however, has always whispered me not to despair, and many times I have trampled through mud and rain to fill appointments at Wolverhampton, when at the same time I might have had much larger congregations nearer home and more easily obtained. It sometimes has been the case that having preached there at night, we were compelled to return to Bilston for a place to lay our heads. In this respect, however; I have been rather more fortunate than those whom I sometimes have sent to fill my appointments. 54.

Birmingham benefited greatly from its proximity to the Staffordshire Conference, for missionaries either labouring in the Potteries or travelling there would often journey to Birmingham. The city thus enjoyed the services of the most eminent missionaries of the day who augmented the labours of those for whom this was the chosen field. The effect upon the enquirer or convert must have been immeasurable when addressed by Brigham Young or Wilford Woodruff,

53. Ibid. Report from Lorenzo Snow. 19th January 1841.

54. Ibid.

whose labours and feats in America would be familiar to an audience. A West Bromwich convert, Henry Stokes, acknowledged this, recording that he had been comforted and strengthened by visits from travelling missionaries.⁵⁵

1840 had witnessed the Mormon Church attempting to establish itself in the "Black Country"; by the early months of 1841, however, Church leaders and missionaries were far more optimistic when anticipating the prospects for the Saints in the region. Snow commented that "the Church there is moving steadily onward in the increase of knowledge and multiplying of its members. The priests of Baal, however, bark and howl most ferociously." ⁵⁶. Alfred Cordon was more specific: "The Saints here are in good spirits. Our meetings are quite well attended, considering the circumstances. We had upwards of one hundred attend last Sabbath evening." ⁵⁷. Both alluded to the opposition the Saints were beginning to meet, this antagonism taking, in these early stages, the publishing of handbills denouncing the Church, and the disturbing of meetings. Paradoxically, opposition to a sect or church is a mark of that organisation's success; opposition does

55. Henry Stokes, Reminiscences : C.H.O., Msd . 1587.

56. Manuscript History of the British Mission : entry under "Birmingham Conference". Report from Lorenzo Snow, 19th January 1841.

57. Ibid. Report from Alfred Cordon, 17th February 1841.

not precede or anticipate its adversary's success, it follows it. The opposition the Birmingham Saints were beginning to experience was, therefore, a mark of the Conference's development.

The status of conference was bestowed upon Birmingham on 28th February 1841, at which time its three branches - Grets Green, West Bromwich and Birmingham - aggregated 112 members. The newly designated Conference developed very slowly from this beginning, its President, James Riley, recognizing the difficulties it was to face during its infancy, particularly the withdrawal of its most famous missionaries, for the conferring of conference status co-incided with the majority of the Apostles and their fellow missionaries returning to America. Wisely, President Riley concentrated upon instilling discipline and loyalty throughout the Conference, consolidating the earlier missionary labour so that any expansion that might occur had a sound base. There was also much energy within the Conference, he himself being an indefatigable outdoor preacher. In this he was joined by Elder Adams, a charismatic teacher with a gift for rhetoric:

There is a great stir about the sect, which is everywhere spoke against. Since our beloved brother, Elder Adams, has been here, the people come out to hear the Word. The able manner in which he explained the Scriptures, the glorious things which he unfolded and brought to light, engaged the attention of the people more than is ordinarily the case, and his persevering and untiring zeal in the prosecution of his mission, causes the Saints to bless him in their

hearts, where the memory of him will exist till we meet in Zion to recount our toils and rest from our labours. ⁵⁸.

The Saints were sustained in their belief but, whilst opposition was voiced, membership grew only marginally. At West Bromwich, fourteen new members were baptized during the first half of the year. Initially this branch met in butcher Joseph Neal's house in Spon Lane but subsequently the elders hired a large house with a shop front affording a bow window. This shop they had furnished and fitted with seats so that it resembled a chapel and was open to the view of onlookers; a Saint, William Broomhead, resided in the rest of the house. ⁵⁹. From this preaching house, Elder Thomas Tyler and his wife Sophie reported "we are looking, striving, receiving visions, blessings and gifts."⁶⁰. The Conference was on the threshold of expansion: its membership was united, its leaders and preachers respected and enthusiastic, its preaching rooms established.

During the winter months of 1841-42 and the following spring, recruitment to the Birmingham Conference accelerated : at its inception the Conference numbered just in excess of one hundred; by May 1842 membership exceeded three hundred, representing eight

58. Ibid. Report from President James Riley, 31st October 1841.

59. Henry Stokes, Reminiscences :

60. Manuscript History of the British Mission : entry under "West Bromwich Branch ".

branches within a ten mile radius of the city. The following year, during which two hundred new converts were welcomed, Reuben Hedlock, President of the British Mission, on a visit to Birmingham witnessed the good feeling within the Conference and observed that there were "some additions every week and many inquiring after the truth".⁶¹ He appealed for experienced elders to be attached to the Conference for "the Saints appear teachable and are willing to do right if they know what to do." Many, he observed, wished to emigrate but were too poor to accomplish it.

At this time the character of the Conference underwent a change as its field of operation was expanded to encompass Kidderminster, Leamington and Stratford-upon-Avon. The pattern of establishing and strengthening the parent branch, developing the conference upon this nucleus and then radiating outwards was being repeated in the industrial heart of the Midlands. The Birmingham Conference, however, undertook each stage of this development with impeccable timing, so that expansion did not denude the parent branch or exhaust it of energy or resources. By 1844 membership had passed seven hundred, the original group of branches contributing some four hundred members and thus ensuring the strength and stability at the centre of the Conference. However, the territory covered by the Conference now extended into South Wales, Aberdare, Merthyr Tydfil and Tredegar figuring among these new branches. The extremely influential Welsh

61. Manuscript History of the British Mission : entry under "Birmingham Conference ". Report from Reuben Hedlock, 17th December 1843.

Conference, therefore, had its roots in the West Midlands, from whence certain of its founding branches were administered in the middle years of the 1840s. The Birmingham Conference was demonstrating its ability to respond to the pressures associated with a large membership and a vast geographical area.

The Birmingham Conference commemorated the first anniversary of the deaths of Joseph and Hyrum Smith with a service of prayer and fasting which united them with fellow Saints in Britain and America. They shared the occasion with a special guest. Wilford Woodruff had returned to Britain in January 1845 to preside over the European Mission; on 27th June he joined Birmingham Saints in worship and remembrance.

On the 27th June I kept a day of fasting and prayer in the town of Birmingham with a flourishing branch of the Church of nearly 400 members, under the guidance and teaching of Father Robert Crook. I had an interesting meeting with the Saints on that evening, and while hearing the testimony of various individuals one truth was strongly impressed upon my mind, which was that notwithstanding one year had passed away since the Prophets were martyred at Carthage yet the work which they had established and sealed with their own blood was alive in the hearts of tens of thousands and bringing forth fruit to the honor and glory of God. I attended a council meeting with the officers of the Church in Birmingham and was happy to find that perfect union prevailed among them. I spent an interesting day with them on Sunday 29th June. They held their meeting in a commodious room which they had rented for a year in the High Street. I preached in the morning and afternoon, communed with about 400 Saints, confirmed five, blessed several children, and administered to several that were sick; the remainder of the afternoon was occupied by the brethren and sisters in bearing their testimony of the work of God, and truly it was an interesting time. In the evening, the house was crowded to excess and many could not find admission. A large number of strangers were present who had not before attended our meetings. Although

I addressed them somewhat lengthy, good order prevailed, and the best of attention was given and I have no doubt but that many will yet be added to the Church in Birmingham. The prospect for the spread of the work in that place was never better than at the present time, and I have the satisfaction of saying that during my stay there, I saw no spirit manifest with any member of that branch of the Church but perfect union. Elder Crook is much blessed in his labours and is striving to build up the Kingdom of God, he has the hearts and affections of the Saints. 62.

Throughout the second half of the 1840s and the early years of the following decade, membership of the Birmingham Conference grew at an extraordinary rate, despite the loss of its Welsh branches and those other branches - Stratford and Leamington amongst them - that lay beyond a reasonable travelling distance of the city. At the first quarterly conference of 1848, Cyrus H. Wheelock, President of the Conference, announced that membership had exceeded one thousand; during the following twelve months the Conference received 434 new members, the Birmingham Branch alone conducting 190 baptisms. 1850 witnessed membership passing the two thousand mark, the last six months of the year recording 360 new members. During the entire period of this unprecedented development, Conference spokesmen referred to Church meetings being fully subscribed, the confidence of the members, the energy and initiative of the elders, and the prospects of additional future growth. In December 1848, Harrison Burgess informed Orson Pratt

62. Manuscript History of the British Mission : entry under "Birmingham Conference".

that "they have the best chapel here that I have seen among the Saints and are drawing a large congregation. On Sunday evening there were present from twelve to fifteen hundred people of a respectable class." 63.

The chapel to which Burgess referred was the Livery Street Chapel which the Mormons gained in 1845, a place of worship formerly belonging to the Congregationalists. 64. This was in use at the time of the 1851 Religious Census which reported an evening attendance of twelve hundred, which substantiates Burgess' claim and suggests that in Birmingham Mormonism was established as a serious church. Mormon occupation of the Livery Street Chapel illustrates the changing fortunes of religious bodies, the sacred hymns of the Saints replacing the more familiar offerings of English non-conformity. As its own needs changed, the Mormon Church was to utilize other former non-conformist chapels: between 1852 and 1858 it occupied the Cambridge Street Chapel in the city, whilst in the following decade the Saints succeeded the Methodist New Connexion in worshipping in the Oxford Street Chapel. It is worth reflecting that just ten years prior to their accommodating huge congregations in the Livery Street Chapel, they were using private rooms, such as Joseph Neal's butcher's shop in West Bromwich. The individual Saint was still acquainted with poverty but as a corporate body Mormons had acquired a dignity to accompany their faith.

63. Ibid. Letter from Harrison Burgess to Orson Pratt, 8th December 1848.

64. The Victorian History of the Counties of England : Warwickshire, Vol. 7, Birmingham : London, 1964, p.64.

The Birmingham Conference, which grew to be the largest conference within the British Mission, was also the archetypal conference in terms of its membership, during the 1840s and 1850s the pattern of its growth and subsequent decline mirroring that of the Mission as a whole. Yet throughout this period Birmingham knew no peer, for its actual membership exceeded that of other individual conferences; similarities lay in the percentage change of the respective bodies rather than in any comparison of numbers. The Birmingham Conference achieved its peak membership in 1852, a year later than the Mission and then both commenced a parallel decline: in 1856, as Utah was poised for the Mormon War, both bodies returned membership figures that were 68% of their highest recorded memberships; at the end of the decade, identical returns of 42% of peak records were recorded. In both instances the difficulties in Utah which affected the missionary programme and brought a temporary cessation to Church emigration may be seen reflected in membership figures. The Birmingham Conference was an indicator for the entire Mission.

Even in decline, however, the Birmingham Conference retained a remarkable numerical strength, the explanation for which lay in the sound organization that had been synonymous with its leadership. Certainly the Conference had experienced some occasional difficulties - in 1854 criticism had been expressed at its funding and the necessity

to take up collections at every meeting to finance the travelling elders who relied upon the membership to sustain them, and in the same year Saints were asked to consecrate one day's earnings to clear the Conference debt ⁶⁵. but there is no evidence of widespread dissatisfaction with or within the governing council. In the late 1850s, as the decline in membership became particularly marked, the official reports of the Conference depict an enthusiastic and soundly organized body whose activities encompassed both Saints and non-Mormons. The report for 1856 ⁶⁶. cites a Conference strength of 1516 of whom 146 were elders and 133 priests, the majority of whom were engaged in out-door preaching and the distribution of tracts. 3,000 copies of Marriage and Morals in Utah had been circulated, especially to important civic and religious leaders in the city, obviously in an attempt to counter accusations relating to plural marriage. Although an opinion had been expressed that in some parts of the Conference the Saints were labouring to little or no avail, the contrary proved to be the case, for within the preceding twelve months 298 persons had been baptized. However, this number was balanced by those emigrating, 178, and those excommunicated for neglecting their duties, specifically those concerning communal worship and the paying of tithes. Within the Conference ten Sabbath Schools were maintained, at which, in addition

65. Manuscript History of the British Mission : entry under "Birmingham Conference".

66. Ibid.

to religious and sectarian instruction, reading and writing were taught to the young attenders. A course of lectures had been undertaken in the ten principal branches of the Conference, these apparently being well attended. The impression that is suggested by the report is of an active, well organized, large and successful conference, controlled centrally and with understanding and authority; branch records of the period confirm this representation.

Conference reports, however, have a limited value; they deal with the general rather than the particular, with the organization of the conference rather than its individual members. What the report omitted was the struggle against poverty that so many members experienced as they pursued their faith and complied with the regulations and requirements of their Church. The decline in the demand for manufactured goods lowered wages in Birmingham in the late 1850s and early 1860s and brought about a scarcity of work, which affected many Saints. During 1861, William G. Mills, writing from Birmingham, twice felt the need to allude to the poverty and unemployment facing members: ⁶⁷. on the second occasion he related this to their inability to plan their emigration.

The spirit of gathering seemed to burn in every bosom but the times, however, were disabling them from delivering themselves, work was hard to be obtained and wages were lower than ever.

67. Manuscript History of the British Mission : entry under "Birmingham Conference". Letter from William G. Mills to President Cannon, 15th June 1861.

In 1865 the West Bromwich Branch reacted to the realization that certain of its Saints were so impoverished that they could no longer afford to purchase the Millennial Star : a fund was instituted to provide the journal for those without the means to purchase it. ⁶⁸. At approximately the same time the branch announced a day of fasting, requiring of the Saints that they should donate what they would normally have spent on food to provide a Christmas dinner for the poor in their midst. ⁶⁹. Two years later in the report of the branch's work it formally recorded "that a great deal of poverty existed." ⁷⁰. This was an important matter, not simply on humanitarian grounds, but because it implied that, many of its more progressive and ambitious members having emigrated, the branch and the conference contained a far greater proportion of the poor and, incidentally, the aged, than had been the case during the years of growth and development. In reality, the response to the gathering and the success of the Mission's emigration programme plus external economic factors that resulted in a recession, were having an adverse effect on a Church already in decline.

Additionally, the Birmingham Conference was reaping another reward of its earlier success. No stranger to opposition from the early 1840s, it found itself facing an orchestrated attack

68. Manuscript History of the British Mission : entry under "West Bromwich Branch".

69. Ibid.

70. Ibid.

upon its position within the city that culminated in the extreme hostility of 1857, when crowds, having been treated to and incited by the rhetoric of Dr. Brindley, attempted to vandalise Church premises and assault individual Saints.⁷¹ It was a paradox that the city noted for its liberalism and tolerance and a press that reflected these values should be the venue for some of the worst anti-Mormon rioting experienced in this country. The extent of their effect upon membership and potential converts is a matter for surmise; that they did have an effect is beyond dispute.

The Birmingham Conference maintained an important and influential presence throughout the 1860s, its membership remaining numerically quite stable although its personnel changed considerably. This resulted from the British Mission's ongoing reorganization of its conferences, for as numbers declined in the smaller conferences and they became more difficult and less efficient to manage, they were closed and their branches annexed to more prosperous neighbouring conferences. As the decade progressed, therefore, the territory administered by Birmingham grew, as it assumed responsibility for branches transferred from other conferences. The most significant of these annexations occurred at the end of the decade following the demise of the Warwickshire

71. See Chapter 7 "Opposition and Persecution", pp. 323-329.

Conference, which had enjoyed an independent existence from 1846, when it was founded with seven branches and 168 members, until its closure at the end of 1869. This Conference in its early years had been based upon Leamington and had included branches at Stratford, Coventry and Rugby. It had been fortunate in its presidents, Thomas Smith, formerly a member of the United Brethren and one of their foremost preachers, assuming the presidency upon the founding of the Conference and Alfred Cordon, returning to Britain on a mission in 1848, being confirmed as the second President of the Conference. At its most active, it claimed 763 members and 29 branches, an apparently well established body, yet in its plethora of branches lay its inevitable problems and ultimate closure since many of these branches must have been very small indeed and, therefore, always vulnerable, either to the emigration of their members or neglect of duty, perhaps associated with an ageing membership. After 1851 numbers declined rapidly, membership having halved by 1860, a marked contrast to both the national pattern and that of the Birmingham Conference; at its close it had just over two hundred members.

The Birmingham Conference, therefore, had to confront the situation it had known in the early 1840s, that of having to administer to Saints spread over an excessively large area. Successive presidents in their reports refer to the problems this posed, both the administrative difficulties and those facing Saints who increasingly felt their isolation and the lack of incentive

to comply with the expectations of the Church. President Shumway, writing in November 1869, recorded his response to the challenge.

I have divided the Conference into two districts, and Brother Eldridge takes one and my brother Charles the other. I take a roving commission to myself, traveling where most needed, and where likely to do the most good. We have twelve meeting rooms in the Conference, where meetings are held on Sundays, as well as evening meetings during the week. The saints are visited once each week at their houses by the visiting officers, except in some cases where the scattered conditions of the saints render it impossible. 72.

Two years later, Joseph Argyle reported in similar manner on the condition of the Saints, many of whom were "very poor and have had to suffer for lack of the necessities of life this winter through the severe frosts." In an extremely pessimistic letter he lamented the lack of converts entering the Church, realistically recognizing that when the British Mission commenced "many people were ready to receive their testimony, thousands more baptized, and the power of God made manifest to them to overflowing." Persecution had followed and once that first harvest of Saints had been gathered, it became progressively more difficult to make converts. The non-Mormons, whom he tried to address, "have been dwindling into darkness and it seems as though the whole world are falling into infidelity as fast as time can take them." The following year Charles H. Wilcken,

72. Manuscript History of the British Mission : entry under "Birmingham Conference". Letter of President Shumway to Albert Carrington, 17th November 1869.

73. Ibid. Report of Joseph Argyle, 16th March 1871.

who had only recently taken over as President, reflected in similar vein: "I don't see what more we can do; if people will not listen, we certainly cannot make them, still it makes me feel uncomfortable and uneasy." ⁷⁴. During his second year in office he defined quite clearly certain of the problems the Conference faced.

You are aware that I have a great many scattered members who are not privileged to assemble themselves with the Saints in meetings; these I have hunted up, stayed with them, and have cheered and comforted them, and in most instances have administered the sacrament to them. I have found some of them have not partaken of this holy ordinance for years, had also neglected to pay their tithing, nor even saved anything for the emigration, in consequence of which they are "neither cold nor hot." In a few cases the spirit has left them to that extent that they fear lest somebody should find out they are Latter-Day Saints. ⁷⁵.

The problems with which succeeding presidents grappled were endemic in any large conference in decline, responsible for a large area in which could be found a number of scattered communities, and whose members were ageing and therefore less involved in both conference business and Church duties. Between 1870 and 1877 membership went into an even more rapid decline: at the commencement of the decade it could claim approximately nine hundred Saints; at the time of Brigham Young's death, that figure had halved. The Conference was still baptizing some fifty converts a year but waste and natural causes were taking an increasing toll. The pattern for the remainder of the century was determined.

74. Millennial Star: Vol. 34, 19th November 1872.

75. Millennial Star: Vol. 35, 11th February 1873.

The Birmingham Conference may stand as the example of a large and progressive conference, adapting to respond to the variables of growth and those that accompanied decline; it illustrates the patterns and types of membership throughout this process; it depicts the achievements of and the difficulties that beset both leadership and members. In a Church extolled for the efficiency of its organization, the Birmingham Conference demonstrates that successful administration related to flexibility: the management appropriate to a developing conference would be inapplicable to a buoyant membership of 2,300 or a declining body of 500; the organization demanded of a conference, all of whose branches were within ten miles of a central point, differed from that required by a dispersed community whose extremities were one hundred or more miles apart. The Birmingham Conference at varying times had to accept all these variables and more, it had to accept radical transformations to its organization and shape so that it might accommodate differing sets of conditions. This is the real achievement of the Conference: it could adapt and accommodate; in this it was as successful during its decline as it had been during its development. The same could be written of the British Mission; the Birmingham Conference was the Mission in miniature.

Whilst Conference titles give little indication of the extent of the administrative responsibility of the conference or of the geographical perimeter, they do tend to indicate the organizational centre and those referred to so far in this study are, at least, recognizable by the city or county from which they take their

respective names. This is not so obviously the case with the two initial conferences to be instituted within the British Mission, the Bran Green and Gadfield Elm Conference and the Froome's Hill Conference, which were founded within a week of each other in June 1840 and which are identifiable landmarks in any chronicle of the Mormon Church. Both originate from the missionary labours of Wilford Woodruff who, responding to revelation, ^{76.} left the Staffordshire Potteries in March 1840 for the counties of Gloucestershire, Herefordshire and Worcestershire and specifically for the farm of John Benbow, which was to be located at Castle Froome, just five miles from Ledbury. Here was to be enacted one of the strangest and certainly one of the most successful programmes of proselytizing undertaken by the Church. Woodruff was apparently anticipated by John Benbow, since on the day following his arrival, he addressed a well attended meeting in a large room at Hill Farm, the meeting having been advertized among the local community of the United Brethren. ^{77.} On the next day, 6th March 1840, Woodruff conducted the initial baptisms in Herefordshire; among the six converts were John and Jane Benbow and two preachers of the Brethren, Charles Price and John Cheese, the latter of whom was to become a major figure in the subsequent development of the Mormon Church in this area of the Midlands. The conversion of almost the entire congregation

76. See this chapter, pages 188'- 189.

77. Manuscript History of the British Mission: entry under "Froome's Hill Branch".

of the United Brethren during the spring of that year confirmed the rightness of Woodruff's extraordinary resolve; they were "searching for light and truth but had gone as far as they could and were calling upon the Lord continually to open the way before them and send them light and knowledge, that they might know the true way and be saved." 78. Five weeks after his first coming to the area, Woodruff reflected upon the results of his labour.

I Wilford Woodruff being led by the Spirit visited Frooms Hill in Herefordshire England, 5 miles North of Ledbury on the 5th day of March 1840 and commenced preaching the word of God unto the people and many received my testimony and I commenced Baptizing such as should be saved and in one month and 5 days I Baptized Mr. Thomas Kington the superintendant of the Church of the United Brethren which came out of the methodist connexion and I also Baptized forty eight preachers of the United Brethren and 112 of the members making 159 souls in all.* This scenery flung into my hands or under my superintendancy and care 42 established places of preaching which were licensed according to law including one Chapel, this has opened the largest field for labour and increase of numbers of any door that has been opened in the same length of time since the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints has been established. Their was among this number Baptized some of most all classes and churches, 46 preachers, one clark of the Church of England, one constable and a number of wealthy farmers and when I left this vast field of Labor to go to Preston to attend the Conference their was nearly 200 souls ready to be baptized as soon as an opportunity offers. 79.

Woodruff's experiences in this region are without parallel elsewhere within the British Mission: in other areas the missionaries attempted to make initial contacts, particularly through the agencies

78. Quoted by Matthias F. Cowley, Op. cit. : p. 117.

79. Wilford Woodruff, Journals: 16th April 1840.
*There is an obvious discrepancy in Woodruff's figures.

of family, friends or personal recommendation; early development was slow and laborious, Saints and potential converts were prone to the frustrations of rejection; in Herefordshire, and subsequently in Gloucestershire and Worcestershire, Woodruff was confronted by an entire sect - some six hundred members who anticipated his arrival and were at that stage in their personal and collective quest for understanding, that, within two days of his arrival, the first baptisms were conducted. Here there was an immediate response and, as the leaders of the United Brethren accepted the Mormon doctrines, so their former members followed. The Mormon Church received members and preachers - Woodruff refers to 46 - so that it inherited an already established hierarchy and, likewise important, a large number of houses and other buildings licensed for preaching. Additionally, among these new converts were some men of substance who were prepared to help finance the work of the Church. Foremost amongst these, of course, was John Benbow, who contributed generously to the upkeep of the missionaries, and specifically helped sustain Woodruff, and also financed various printing ventures, his generosity facilitating the printing of the Book of Mormon in this country and the Church's book of Sacred Hymns.

The first Sunday of his sojourn in this new field of labour witnessed Woodruff addressing large congregations at all three services: in the morning he preached at Froome's Hill; the after-noon service was at Stanley Hill; in the evening Benbow's farm provided

the venue. Whilst Woodruff's aggregate congregation was estimated at a thousand, the rector of the parish that included Benbow's farm addressed just fifteen worshippers at his service. ⁸⁰. The following week some eight hundred persons attended a service at Froome's Hill, ⁸¹. at which service John Cheese was ordained a priest. Within days the superintendent of the United Brethren, Thomas Kington, was baptized and on the Sunday following ordained an elder. This was a crucial achievement in Woodruff's campaign, for Kington was both influential - as might be expected - and respected within his former sect and his conversion led many others to choose the same path. He complemented Woodruff and collectively they commenced a programme of visits to take in all members of the United Brethren, of whom only one resisted the new faith and was not baptized. ⁸². Whilst the United Brethren provided the nucleus of Woodruff's converts, he appealed to a wider spectrum of the population and certainly baptized considerable numbers who had previously remained within the Established Church, much to the indignation of the clergy who by the end of March were assembling to consider how best to respond to this new challenge. ⁸³. At Ledbury on 30th March, he received the hand of friendship from a Baptist Minister, who observed

80. Quoted by Matthias F. Cowley, Op. cit. : p.117.

81. Manuscript History of the British Mission : entry under "Froome's Hill Branch".

82. Quoted by Matthias F. Cowley, Op. cit. : p. 119.

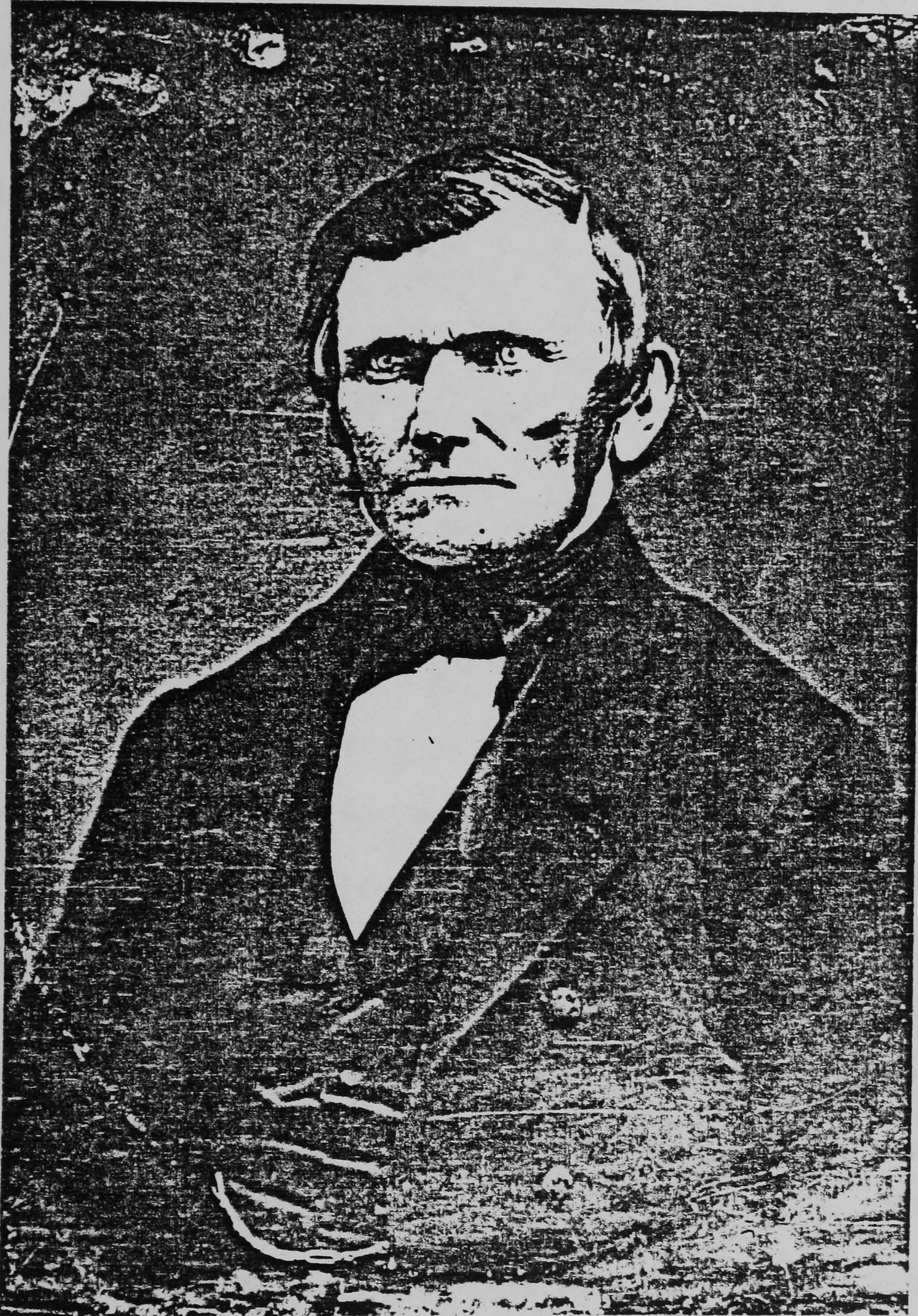
83. Wilford Woodruff, Journals: entry 29th March 1840.

the Apostle preaching in the street to an audience which had quickly and spontaneously assembled; the minister offered Woodruff his pulpit which they occupied together, the Baptist praying for the success of Woodruff's mission. 84.

Woodruff attended the Council and General Conference of the Church from 14th to 16th April in Preston, returning to Herefordshire via the Potteries, the industrial Black Country and some of the more scenic regions of the West Midlands, whose attractions were acclaimed in the journal of his travelling companion, Brigham Young. 85. Together they commenced a month of missionary activity, sometimes labouring together, on other occasions visiting separate communities. In late April they were joined by Willard Richards who shared their work, as did Thomas Kington and other of the former preachers of the United Brethren. Here was assembled a missionary team containing the most eminent of the Church's American preachers and local men of conviction and enthusiasm who knew the area and its people. Brigham Young's journal is an indication of the thoroughness of the mission, as every day Mormonism was preached in the villages that compose the area; the journal becomes a travelogue that imposed considerable physical demands upon those who undertook the itinerary.

84. Ibid. entry for 30th March 1840.

85. Brigham Young, Manuscript History 1801 - 1844.



Wilford Woodruff..

Charles W. Carter Collection, Church Archives,
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints.

By mid June the missionaries had established forty branches of the Church in Herefordshire, Gloucestershire and south Worcestershire, each within walking distance of its neighbour. Certain branches were extremely small and comprised just one family at this time, others such as Dymock, which had 44 members, were already healthy; the majority derived from the United Brethren. The need to organize and administer this number of branches and sustain the membership within the region, gave birth to the concept of the conference, the initial one being constituted on 14th June 1840 and based upon the former United Brethren Chapel at Gadfield Elm, which had served members from Bran Green and Gadfield Elm, the Conference taking the name of both branches. Woodruff presided at the meeting which authorized the founding of the Conference; Thomas Kington was given the privilege of assuming responsibility for the Conference which was to hold weekly meetings, these to be alternately convened north and south of the River Severn which ran through the area covered by this newly instituted body. A week later, the second Conference in the British Mission was organized, as with its predecessor from the grouping together of twenty branches. The meeting which authorized the Froome's Hill Conference was held in the house of John Cheese, again Woodruff presiding. Each branch was represented and John James, President of the branch at Froome's Hill, was elected to preside over the new conference. Following this official business, the sacrament was administered to several hundred Saints, twenty persons were confirmed and a number of children blessed. As with the Gadfield Elm Conference, Froome's Hill was composed of branches differing vastly in their membership; at the quarterly meeting on the 21st September, the

smallest branches, Willington Heath and Dinmore Hill, both had just two members, whilst the largest, the Froome's Hill Branch, numbered 117. The most arresting fact, however, was the Conference's total membership, 734 Saints being numbered at this time. This was the more remarkable as the Conference had already commenced to lose some members through the Church's official emigration programme. The North America had sailed on 7th August 1840 with its complement of some two hundred Saints under the guidance and presidency of Theodore Turley. Of this number, approximately eighty came from the two Conferences and forty one were financed by John Benbow, who was one of the emigrating party. Benbow had sold his farm and now extended his generosity to his fellow Saints, employing a portion of the capital he received to pay for the passages of those who had shared his worship and had been formerly employed by him. Benbow, himself, settled initially in Nauvoo, where he reconstructed his English farm, drawing from Woodruff a comparison with the Garden of Eden. 86.

By the end of 1840 the aggregate membership of the two Conferences exceeded one thousand; numerically this region had become the most important within the British mission. Paradoxically, however, the two Conferences were not to enjoy longevity. The Gadfield Elm Chapel, the focal point for worship within the Conference was used for the last time by the Saints in March 1841

86. Quoted by Matthias F. Cowley, Op. cit. : p. 159.

when Woodruff took his farewell of the Conference preparatory to his return to America. The Chapel had been part of John Benbow's estate and had been sold with his farm and lands. Emigration took its toll of many of the branches, especially the smaller ones, so that in a reorganization in 1842, the Gadfield Elm Conference was annexed to that of Cheltenham which had been organized earlier in the same year; the irony of this was that the Cheltenham Branch had been one of the founding branches of the Gadfield Elm Conference in June 1840; now, two years later, the offspring had assumed responsibility for the parent. The first conference to be organized in England had an existence of just two years, yet its significance was guaranteed. The Froome's Hill Conference lasted for a further two years before it met a different fate, its name being lost in a change of the Conference title, in 1844 the Mars Hill Conference succeeding that of Froome's Hill and continuing responsibility for its branches and members. At the time of their respective demise both Conferences had substantial memberships although both had observed many of their more prominent converts emigrate. The Gadfield Elm Conference had some three hundred members when its status was lost; Froome's Hill had 681 which made it only slightly smaller than Birmingham at the same date. It had, however, declined from a figure in excess of 1,000 in mid 1841.

To encompass the extreme western perimeter of this field of labour, the Church organized a third conference in 1841, the Garway Conference, whose responsibility reached into Wales as far as Abergavenny. Again the initial centre of the Conference, the branch

of the Church at Garway, owed its origins to the United Brethren, and, in fact, its first President was Thomas Kington. By 1845 its influence had extended to much of Monmouth and in recognition of its labours in Wales it came under the jurisdiction of Dan Jones, who more than anyone was responsible for the growth of Mormonism in the Principality. Its membership, covering a large area, tended to be dispersed, and never rose much above a hundred. In 1848 it combined with the Mars Hill Conference, which had declined in the mid 1840s, to form the newly organized Herefordshire Conference under the presidency of John Spiers, formerly a member of the United Brethren at Redmarley in Worcestershire. Spiers had first heard Woodruff preach in the chapel at Gadfield Elm on 3rd April 1840 and had been baptized by the Apostle three days later. 87. Upon Kington's advice he had given up work to become a full-time travelling preacher, which labour he followed until his emigration in the spring of 1843. Five years later, having experienced many of the traumas that had been the lot of Mormons in Illinois and Missouri, he returned on a mission to Britain to become the first President of the Herefordshire Conference.

The creation of the Herefordshire Conference was yet another rationalization undertaken by the Church as it attempted to adapt to changing patterns of membership throughout the region. Over the next two decades the structure of the Conference was to change periodically as branches were deleted or annexed as the need arose. The new Conference administered 17 branches and at its inception

87. John Spiers : Reminiscences and Diary, 1840 - 1877.

claimed 521 members; within two years this had grown dramatically to 954 Saints spread over 22 branches in 1850, at which time certain branches were transferred to the Worcestershire Conference, Ledbury amongst them. From 1852 onwards, however, Herefordshire mirrored the national pattern and membership went into rapid decline; by the commencement of the 1860s it had dropped below 200, a figure around which it hovered until 1867 when the Worcestershire Conference was itself closed and its branches annexed to Herefordshire.

The Worcestershire Conference had been founded in 1843 with 116 members representing three branches. Over the next two years it grew as it welcomed branches at Stratford, Leamington, Kidderminster and Coventry. The first three of these branches illustrate clearly the considerable exchange of branches within the conferences of the West Midlands for whilst the Worcestershire Conference benefited from their annexation, the Birmingham Conference was depleted. Three years later, upon the foundation of the Warwickshire Conference, they were transferred again. First under the presidency of Thomas Smith, who was also to be instrumental in the founding of the Warwickshire Conference, and later James Ure, the Worcestershire Conference grew steadily but unspectacularly. Its greatest boost occurred in 1851 when certain branches were removed from Herefordshire and placed under its authority. At this time it could claim nearly seven hundred members. Only in the final two years of the 1850s did membership go into rapid decline; by the end of the decade it was just below two hundred and remained of that size for the rest of its existence.

Writing in 1864, Frank Merrill, reporting from the Conference, presented a familiar script.

This Conference has been, in years past, one of the best in the Mission, but, like many other Conferences, I suppose it has been greatly reduced. It reaches some considerable distance into Shropshire and Herefordshire. I have to travel from 5 to 28 miles from one family of Saints to another. 88.

Merrill evidently attempted to remedy the lack of response the mission was then receiving. He preached at numerous outdoor meetings but, as he expressed it, rather than having the privilege of baptizing many, he had that of warning hundreds.⁸⁹ It was hardly surprising, therefore, when one further act of rationalization annexed the Conference to Herefordshire in 1867, bringing the membership of the latter Conference to 318. The augmented Conference, however, was itself to have a limited life-span, for two years later, in 1869, the Herefordshire Conference ceased to exist as an autonomous body and amalgamated with the largest of the Conferences of the West Midlands, Birmingham.

From the ashes of the Gadfield Elm Conference rose the Cheltenham Conference, centred upon the Gloucestershire town and encompassing a number of the early branches founded by Woodruff. The earliest references to Cheltenham date from 1840; in September of that year Woodruff, en route to Herefordshire from London, stayed

88. Millennial Star : Vol. 26, 2nd April 1864.

89. Millennial Star : Vol. 26, 22nd November 1864.

in the town where he met Elder Browett and his wife; the husband and wife must, in fact, have felt their sectarian isolation, as the report for the branch submitted to the conference at Gadfield Elms on 14th September recorded just three members. 90. Within months, however, there must have been a significant increase for Brigham Young visited Cheltenham on 11th December, recording "I stayed over the Sabbath there, preached twice to a very attentive congregation. In the afternoon the house was full to overflowing. Elder Glover is preaching in this place, and in the regions around, with much success. I think he is a humble, good man, and will do much good." 91.

At its foundation on 15th May 1842, the Cheltenham Conference claimed 540 members from nineteen branches, nine of which had formerly been branches of the Gadfield Elm Conference. This number was to fluctuate a little over the first five years of its existence, largely owing to various policies of reorganization pursued by the British Mission. At the first quarterly meeting of 1847, membership had dropped to 276 of whom nearly half resided in Cheltenham itself. 92. At this point it received a minor infusion as the Chalfond Conference, which had only been founded the previous year and must be a claimant

90. Manuscript History of the British Mission : entry under "Cheltenham Conference".

91 Millennial Star: Vol. 1, January 1941.

92. Manuscript History of the British Mission : entry under "Cheltenham Conference".

for the titles of smallest and briefest of the British Conferences, was annexed to it. Recruitment accelerated considerably and membership rose rapidly to exceed five hundred within a year. During 1851, as national membership peaked, so did that of the Conference, which by the end of the year had 902 members, 111 of whom had been baptized in the second half of that year.⁹³ Throughout this first five years of the decade, membership remained healthy and an impression emerges of a very active and involved Conference. During the first six months of 1853, for example, Elders baptized 72 converts; simultaneously, 97 members were excommunicated throughout the twenty two branches. There is also a repeated suggestion of the poverty of many members. A fast day was held on the second Sunday in January 1853, the Saints being asked to donate their financial saving to purchase copies of the Millennial Star for those Saints too impoverished to buy it. In the same year it became necessary to organize a fund specifically for the clothing of Travelling Elders and to provide for the sustenance of the Conference President. Two years later, in April 1855, a resolution was passed, calling on all Saints to donate two days' wage to provide for Travelling Elders and to discharge the Conference debt.

The second half of the decade witnessed a sharp decline in Conference membership, in fact throughout the 1850s membership more than halved, this despite encouragement from eminent missionaries

93. Ibid.

who laboured in the region. Charles Penrose reported in 1859 that "an excellent spirit prevails in each branch of the Conference." The greater portion of the Saints were assiduously paying their tithing; "they really feel that God will deliver them from bondage through their own exertions, directed by his servants and prospered by his blessings." ⁹⁴. Two years later Elder Gibson caught jointly the moods of optimism and realism in his statement.

Things are looking much better as far as the work of God is concerned. We have better meetings than there have been in many places for years. Baptisms are frequent, and a spirit of union and love manifested itself amongst the Saints, more than I have seen since I came to this country. Temporally, they are in general very poor, and work in many places is hard to get, and when got but poorly paid; yet amidst it all, the Saints are rejoicing. ⁹⁵.

Emigration, in particular, must accept a responsibility for the decline of the Conference. Gibson wrote in August 1861 that he had never previously seen so much enthusiasm for the desire to emigrate. "Almost everyone talks of getting away next spring or trying to do so; and even the strangers who attend our meetings speak of emigration before they speak of baptism. As for myself, no matter what subject I begin to speak upon, it is sure to end in emigration." ⁹⁶. Gibson's observation that the prospect of joining an emigration party proved a greater attraction to certain potential

94. Millennial Star : Vol. 21, 18th June 1859.

95. Millennial Star : Vol. 23, 30th March 1861.

96. Millennial Star : Vol. 23, 17th August 1861.

converts than did Mormon theology, gives obvious weight to the argument that the secular rather than the religious aspects of the Church's teaching motivated many to join the sect and gives some explanation for the high incidence of excommunication. If this is so, then emigration exercised a double influence upon the demise of conferences within the British Mission. Certainly in 1862 large numbers of Saints emigrated from the Cheltenham Conference, President Gibson anticipating that some 120 members would leave the locality for Zion during the year.⁹⁷ In August his prophecy was confirmed as his successor reported that "the emigration of April and May thinned our numbers considerably, and took from us some valiant - hearted men and women."⁹⁸ All apparently rejoiced "that they had been delivered from the thralldom of Babylon."

Cheltenham experienced the fate of other successful conferences, its decline reflecting in part its own earlier success. New baptisms were unable to counter the Saints lost to the Conference through emigration, excommunication and death. The Conference might state "we are doing what we can to fill up the vacancies made by the emigration" but the reality of declining numbers remained. From approximately 400 members at the beginning of the 1860s, numbers declined to about 200 at the end of the decade. Amos Neff, writing in 1870 conceded that there was little that could halt the

97. Manuscript History of the British Mission : entry under "Cheltenham Conference".

98. Millennial Star : Vol. 24, 13th September 1862.

Conference's decline.

There is not much doing in this Conference by way of making converts, although a few have been added to our number recently. But few strangers attend our meetings, owing, I suppose, to the prejudice that exists against us, and for fear of having the finger of scorn pointed at them. ⁹⁹.

Neff was succeeded by Stephen Taylor who assumed the presidency in the summer of 1870 and whose reports echoed those of his predecessor. He commended the Saints for their goodness but was forced to acknowledge their poverty; the average wage, he claimed, was but ten shillings a week. The combination of impoverishment and an ageing congregation meant that few would emigrate. ¹⁰⁰. At this time the Cheltenham branch lost its meeting house and such was the local antagonism to the Saints that there was little prospect of their acquiring a replacement. The inevitable occurred: a reorganization resulted in the Cheltenham Conference being annexed to Bristol, both of which had originated as off-spring of the Gadfield Elms Conference at the beginning of the 1840s. The Cheltenham Conference spanned thirty important years in the development of the Mormon Church in Britain; the Bristol Conference was to exist for a further twenty years.

99. Millennial Star: Vol. 32, 24th May 1870.

100. Millennial Star: Vol. 32, 6th September 1870.

Within the Church, the conference was the effective unit for communication, discipline and the diffusion of Mormon doctrines and teachings. In its infancy a conference exercised control and authority over a clearly defined and localized community; as it developed, however, so the area for which it was responsible likewise grew, the demands upon missionaries and travelling elders increased and this unit of Church organization became more difficult to manage. During the first forty years of its activity in Britain, the Church organized twelve conferences within the West Midlands, those ranging in significance from that of Chalfond Hill which only existed for about a year before amalgamating with Cheltenham, to the Birmingham Conference which spanned the entire period and exercised a national influence. Among the conferences of the West Midlands were those of enormous historical significance to the growth of the Church, the earliest conferences in the Mission. The Bran Green and Gadfield Elms Conference and the Froome's Hill Conference originated from fortuitous circumstances but their organization and brief existence determined the nature of the subsequent and larger conferences that outlived these forerunners. What all these conferences had in common and enjoyed were the services during their formative days of American missionaries of remarkable perseverance and calibre and the enthusiasm of local Saints who showed a willingness and an aptitude for leadership.

The development of the respective conferences illustrates the variety of experience within the West Midlands. The differing landscapes and environments, the historical and religious traditions

of individual towns and regions, the individual awareness and needs of the population, made for diversity rather than homogeneity. A concept of the typical conference cannot be advanced, for each conference responded to different circumstances and developed its own personality and uniqueness. The Mormon Church was rightly applauded for the efficiency of its emigration programme, in which patterns of conduct and management may be clearly distinguished. It is tempting to extend the concept of effective organization to the Church's overseeing of its conferences but any such attempt should be resisted. The early conferences evolved from the missionary successes within their vicinity; they were not planned. In the 1840s in particular there is no sense of a planned distribution of conferences over the country. During its development the Staffordshire Conference, based upon Stoke-on-Trent, had responsibility for branches in Doncaster and Sheffield, some two or three days' journey from the pottery towns, an arrangement that benefited neither conference nor branches. Certain branches, particularly those in mid Wales were periodically transferred between various conferences without sense of an overall stratagem; decisions appeased immediate needs rather than anticipating the future. There was, therefore, an instability and uncertainty about the conference structure which must have had an adverse effect upon the more mobile branches. The habit of sustaining American missionaries in the office of conference president, which ensured a rapid turnover of presidents, as most missions lasted between twelve and twenty four months, was likewise not conducive to stability.

Whilst, therefore, it is impracticable to delineate with accuracy the conference, there is, nevertheless, throughout the period, a movement away from the smaller conference towards the larger regional conferences, a transference of authority from the defined confines of a localized area to a conference whose territory was considerable, a bureaucratism of the Church's organization that accompanies its evolution and occurs after 1851, when Church membership had commenced its decline. Of the twelve conferences organized within the West Midlands, only Birmingham remained after 1871, its nearest neighbours at that date being Manchester and Bristol, while its territory encompassed a vast area including the counties of Staffordshire, Shropshire, Warwickshire, Worcestershire, Gloucestershire, Herefordshire and Leicestershire. The Saint of the 1840s owed his allegiance to an area conference that he recognized and with which he had an affinity; by the 1870s the Church had reorganized its structure and had applied economies of scale throughout its conferences so that the individual Saint was part of a geographically larger organization, the centre of which might be far removed from his branch, and with which he was no longer intimate. As the members aged and travel became more problematic, so a greater experience of isolation became the lot of many Saints; the impetus of growth and success had been replaced by a spiral of decline that was not to be halted until the twentieth century. The experience of a family of Saints, named Ross, residing in the village of Norton, six miles south of Tewkesbury, may not have been uncommon: Elder George Peacock, visiting the area in 1862, reported

to George Q. Cannon, President of the British Mission, that so small was the branch and so isolated the family, they had not seen a Mormon elder for six years. 101.

In the early 1840s, the centre of Church influence in Britain moved from industrial Lancashire to the Midland counties of England where it remained for at least two decades. The second apostolic mission concentrated its labour in the region and achieved a remarkable return upon its investment. The Religious Census of 1851 is proof of the prominence of the West Midlands within the Mormon Church 102. but statistics are inadequate indices of the importance of the region. Rather it is the Saints of the West Midlands who stand as example of its importance to the Church; many accepted the responsibility of Church office, assuming the mantle of the early American missionaries, presiding over branch or conference, or travelling throughout the mission field; thousands emigrated, taking with them their not inconsiderable industrial skills which were at a premium in America and sustained Church settlements there; many gave example to their own and future generations through acts both private and public. Whatever can be said of the British Mission can also be applied to the West Midlands; the latter was the barometer of the Church in Britain, the Mission in microcosm.

101. Manuscript History of the British Mission : entry under "Norton Branch".

102. See Chapter 3, "The Mission Develops", pp.124-125.

CHAPTER 6.

MIDLAND MORMONS : THE CONVERTS.

"I should have said that they were in their degree
the pick and flower of England."
(Uncommercial Traveller) 1.

In the years immediately following the introduction of Mormonism to Britain, the public mind, perhaps inevitably, conceived a portrait of the convert to the new teachings, a portrait that was to be repeatedly reinforced by the nation's newspapers and journals and was to figure largely in the pamphlets of the clergy, both established and non-conformist, as they sought to discredit missionaries and converts. The rhetoric of these bodies became at once contemptuous of all associated with the Latter-Day Saints and patronising towards those who accepted baptism into that Church; the language of criticism and persuasion developed a familiar phraseology which rapidly established the stereotype of the adherent: "a brand of this new sect, the Mormonites or Latter-Day Saints as they are pleased to call themselves, has arisen here, and from the superstitious, delusive and absurd notions inculcated by the American saint, its founder, it is not perhaps so much to be wondered at that a few ignorant and silly

1. Charles Dickens, Uncommercial Traveller: Odhams Press Limited, London, undated edition p.186.

minded individuals are led away." 2. One newspaper reported that "a number of weak-minded females were dipped in the tide;" 3. in Birmingham "numerous revelations were frequently made to those who were gullible enough to swallow them;" 4. in Gloucester was witnessed "the departure of great numbers of deluded country people old and young for the New Jerusalem in America." 5. To emphasise the assumed ignorance and credulity of the Saints, reporting at times became anecdotal. For one convert, the place of baptism was "an old lint-hole full of filthy stagnant water."

The poor old woman was literally smeared - we cannot say baptised, for as the vagabond minister was proceeding to plunge her over head and ears, away went the edges of the pool, and carried away with them the aged woman and the priest into the bosom of the stinking element. But the worst of this tale is yet to be told - the old woman as might have been expected, became worse after this rough and highly censurable usage, and in a few weeks died. 6.

An elderly Birmingham Saint was likewise singled out for ridicule, she figuring in a party of thirty six who left that city in the autumn of 1842 en route for Nauvoo. When she was "reminded of the dangers of the way, and the possibility of getting drowned,

2. Fife Herald, reprinted in The Times : 17th September 1841.
3. The Manx Liberal, reprinted in The Times: 3rd February 1841.
4. Birmingham Advertizer : 30th September 1842.
5. The Times : 14th August 1841.
6. Fife Herald : reprinted in The Times: 17th September 1841.

in the most innocent manner, "she with reference to the story of Jonah, assured the party who cautioned her that she should reach the city in safety for if the ship sank she should be carried there in a whale's belly and be thrown alive upon the shore." 7. The Worcester Chronicle selected for similar treatment a blind convert, aged eighty two, who was reported to have informed a porter at Worcester Station, where a party of Mormons commenced their emigration, that he "was going off in the full expectation of having his sight restored." 8. The same article characterized the party as "almost all clad in smock frocks and evidently country folk of the most ignorant class."

The collective effort of such reporting must have been unavoidable: the image of the Mormon convert as unschooled, hardly literate, of society's lower orders - the country yokel or the unskilled labourer - the willing dupe for the sharp practices of the itinerant missionaries was established; the Saint was a figure of ridicule and contempt and, occasionally, pity. Yet the achievements of these "unfortunate dupes", "deluded country people" and "ignorant fanatics" 9. in ensuring the establishment of a permanent and prominent mission in Britain, in accepting and fulfilling office within that Church, in participating in and developing an emigration

7. Birmingham Advertiser : 30th September 1842.

8. Worcester Chronicle, reprinted in The Times: 2nd May 1856.

9. The Times : 14th August 1841.

scheme without equal, in providing missionaries for the Church in Britain and elsewhere, in undertaking the arduous trek across plain and mountain and in cultivating an inhospitable land and building cities in the desert, would surely not accord with the image so carefully nurtured in the public mind by orators and newspapers. Indeed such reports and comments provide a finer insight into the minds and reasoning of opponents of the Mormon Church than into the characterization and motivation of the early converts.

"The most spectacular harvest of souls since Wesley's time" ¹⁰. was essentially an individual response; "the experience of no two converts was identical." ¹¹. However, from the reading of research papers but more particularly from the study of diaries and journals of early converts, it becomes possible to identify features common to the experience of significant numbers of Saints and so, within certain facets of Mormon activity, patterns of practice and conduct may be discerned, from which an appreciation of the lives and motives of those converts may emerge.

The arrival of the initial Mormon missionaries in 1837 co-incided with the period when the twin forces of industrialization and urbanization had created a society within which traditional

10. W.H.G. Armytage, Heavens Below : London 1961, P.260.

11. Malcolm R. Thorp, "The Religious Background of Mormon Converts in Britain, 1837 - 1852," in Journal of Mormon History No.4, 1977, p.52.

religious loyalties had been severely tested and the limitations of the various churches, both established and non-conformist, in reaching and influencing large sections of the community were becoming increasingly obvious, as was to be demonstrated by the returns of the religious census, which showed conclusively that church attendance was lowest in the centres of industry, the major manufacturing towns, where industrialization had wrought the greatest changes . Included in a list of such manufacturing centres was every large town described in the general census as a cotton town, the two greatest woollen towns, Leeds and Bradford, and every large coal-town except Wolverhampton,¹² which, although not figuring among the lowest returns, was still some way below the percentage attendance for the country as a whole. Within the Midlands only four towns could claim returns above that national figure: Cheltenham, Worcester, Northampton and Leicester; among the others, the lowest returns came from Birmingham, Coventry and Stoke-on-Trent. The conclusion was therefore drawn that within given bounds church-going was broadly inversely correlated with the size of urban population. ¹³.

This pattern of embarrassingly low urban attendance applied to attendance at both Church of England services and those of the

12. K.S. Inglis, *Op. cit.* : p. 82.

13. W.S.F. Pickering, *Op. cit.* : p. 403. —

non-conformist churches. There were just two exceptions: the RomanCatholic Church and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. The Mormons, therefore, were achieving their greatest successes in those areas where formalized religion had little impact; they were attracting converts from those towns where the major denominations were finding most difficulty. P.A.M. Taylor's analysis of conference records for the period 1850 - 1862 is further confirmation of this finding.¹⁴ Of the 14,000 members for whom details are available, 42% came from communities which at the time of the 1851 census had a population in excess of 50,000, while an additional 32% lived in towns with a population of between 10,000 and 50,000. Thus, nearly three quarters of the membership of the Mormon Church were found in towns the population of which exceeded 10,000; consequently, the Mormon convert of the period was more likely to live in an industrial centre than in a rural community and the image of the convert in his smock frock was certainly not typical of the vast majority of converts.

While, arguably, industrialization and urbanization had created the situation where a mass of the working class population were untouched by the various denominations, a corollary of this effect was that an environment was created where it became possible for an individual to move from sect to sect: "the existence of

14. P.A.M. Taylor. "Why did British Mormons Emigrate?" in Utah Historical Quarterly : Vol. 22, July 1954, p. 260.

numerous competing sects, which was more characteristic of Britain than any other European country, provided a sequence of stepping stones by which the emancipated individual could make his way from the Church to any position of Christian belief, or at last out into the great desert of unbelief." 15. In the diaries, journals and reminiscences of many early converts there is evidence that a considerable number had sought religious satisfaction among other sects prior to accepting the teachings of the Mormon Church, while a smaller number had conducted their search for inspiration within the secular and political philosophies of the age.

From his research into these original sources, Malcolm Thorp has assembled 298 case studies of British Mormons who joined the Church during the first twenty five years of its mission on this side of the Atlantic. 16. Of this number he has identified 104 individuals whom he termed "primitivist seekers", that is, persons who went from one church to another seeking for a religious truth that they could find satisfying and acceptable. He concludes that in all probability this figure is too low, owing to the incompleteness and vagueness of many records, and that a conservative estimate

15. Harold Perkin, The Origins of Modern Industrial Society: University of Toronto Press, 1969; quoted by Malcolm Thorp, The Religious Background of Mormon Converts in Britain. 1837 - 52: p. 52.

16. Malcolm R. Thorp, Op. cit. : pp. 51 - 65.

would be that at least forty percent of early converts could be termed seekers.

Many of the diaries and journals of Midland Saints provide evidence to support this finding. Thomas Crowther a member of the Tipton Branch of the Church, having been introduced to Mormonism by his mother-in-law and father-in-law, recorded his frustrations in attempting to find truth: "I went from one sect to another but I still feel an aken void. I seemed to be hunting something that none of the religious sects had got." 17.

Alfred Cordon had been brought up within the Church of England, within which church both his grandfather and father had held office. 18. At the age of twenty-two, however, having forsaken the church of his youth and following the trauma of burying his first child, a daughter who had survived just eight months, he turned to prayer and, upon being canvassed by a member of the Aitkenite Church, he accepted its authority and subsequently became a preacher for the sect. His search for truth was to be recommenced, however, following a visit from Mary Powel, a member of the Manchester Branch of the Latter-Day Saints, who journeyed to Burslem on a mission. Her preaching and the response to it

17. Thomas Crowther, Autobiography : C.H.O., Mf. 535.

18. Alfred Cordon, Journals.

were sufficiently strong for the Aitkenites to recognize the threat she posed and for them to denounce her teachings, claiming she was a deluded woman, while, according to their tract, the Mormons were "money diggers, gypsies and fortune tellers." Attempting to resolve the conflict and the confusion he was experiencing, Cordon determined to walk to Manchester where he was received by the Saints and was baptized into the Church by David Wilding.

Thomas Day came from a family with an evident history of seeking, for he recalled his father, a blacksmith, who refused to accept any orthodox creed, yet declared that "the true gospel of Jesus will be given to the world in the future." 19. Upon his father's death, Day supported his three younger sisters by working in a Kidderminster carpet factory. He contemplated religion and joined the Arminian Methodists, becoming a local preacher. In 1842 he attended a meeting at Earls Common, some eight miles from Bromsgrove, at which he was converted to the Latter-Day Saints, although at that time his wife shrank from joining them, owing to the incidence of persecution.

The early religious affiliations and seekings of John Powell, if of a different pattern, are particularly interesting. 20. He was

19. Thomas Day. Autobiography.

20. John Powell, A Summary of the Religious Side of My Life : C.H.O., Msd. 4675.

born in Smethwick in 1850 and was orphaned at the age of two, spending the next twelve years in the Poor House in that town. At seventeen he was invited by a clergyman to place himself under the latter's guardianship and to be educated for foreign missionary work under the auspices of the Church of England. He declined and instead accepted the life of itinerant labourer. As such he travelled to America, even journeying to Salt Lake City; of this experience he commented "ignorant of Mormonism, still I liked the Mormons." Upon his return to England he found himself attracted by the evangelical movement, particularly responding to one evangelist who subsequently joined the Salvation Army. Powell accepted the role of evangelist himself and various churches were offered to him. It was while he was serving in this capacity that he heard again the teachings of Mormonism and this time responded, becoming a vehement defender of the faith in many recorded public debates.

A history of former membership of other denominations was a factor common to the vast majority of the six hundred or so members of the United Brethren whom Wilford Woodruff converted in Herefordshire and neighbouring areas. Many of the Brethren in this rural part of the country had formerly been attached to the Church of England but under Woodruff's influence virtually the whole connexion were converted. Among these was John Spiers whose experiences were by no means uncommon.

When quite young I had very serious thoughts on religion and was zealously attached to the Church of England. When I was about 15 years I began to view the abominations of the Church of England (more particularly the character of her minister than her doctrine) and shortly attached myself to a body of Methodists who had separated from the Primitive Methodists under Mr. Thos. Kington and others and taken the name of United Brethren. 21.

With the arrival of Woodruff, the leaders of the United Brethren were converted to Mormonism, Thomas Kington included. Woodruff was introduced all through the society "most of which embraced it and those who would not were scattered so that the society was broken up." Spiers first heard Woodruff preach on 3rd April 1840 in the Chapel at Gadfields Elm. "He dwelt on the first principles of the Gospel and showed the necessity for all to be baptized." Three days later Spiers with several others was baptized by Woodruff.

The early experiences of William Williams of Maddressfield, Worcestershire, were not dissimilar.

We had been brought up in the Bosom of the Church of England But would at times Break out and go and hear other Sects But it would offend our Worthy Minister who thought we would begin to think to liberal and Feard he would lose us. Mother kept a School Part Free Being Paid by the minister Thos. Philpot who was a good man to the Poor but who had so much Aristocracy in him that he thought all his Parish ought to think as he thought. 22.

21. John Spiers, Reminiscences and Diary 1840 - 1877.

22. William Williams, Diary and Letters.

At nineteen Williams worked for Samuel Jones, a teacher of the United Brethren persuasion. He reflected that since "I had lost all relish for the Church of England my Prayer was Lord lead me in the right way." He attended prayer meetings of the Brethren and ultimately "I abandoned all others nearly for them for I thought they tried to love truth and embrace it wherever found."

At the quarterly meeting of the United Brethren, held at the house of John Benbow, Wilford Woodruff was introduced to the assembled Brethren. Very few opposed him but among those who did were William Williams and his employer, Samuel Jones, although there appears to have been an ambivalence in their attitude for "altho we had agreed to oppose those Strange men and this Strange Doctrine yet we all had a secret longing to hear them." Williams held out against the new teachings for some nine weeks, Jones for a further four weeks, until employer and employed were reunited within their newly adopted church.

Perhaps of all the diaries of the early converts from the Midlands, the record that most aptly captures the dilemma which faced the seeker, was that of Henry Stokes, ²³. a West Bromwich Saint, whose parents had been Wesleyan Methodists and who had received his education at the National Church Free School where

23. Henry Stokes, Journal .

"I had been taught their faith and creeds and had stood up in the church and had answered many important questions on their faith and creeds and had been confirmed a member of their church." However, he recalls as a young man watching, one Sunday, the people returning from their respective churches in West Bromwich and asking the inevitable question of which was the true church, the basic question of all those who sought for true authority within the sphere of religion.

Occasionally within these early personal narratives one is afforded an insight into a mind seeking not exclusively among the religious sects or denominations but rather amongst the political creeds from which a certain satisfaction might have been derived by those who became adherents. The most cited of such instances is the diary of John Steele ²⁴. who, when in Glasgow joined the Raccabite (Rechabite) Club and soon after "became a chartist and was very fond of hearing the Socialists and thought very strong of joining them." He added that "about this time I began to think seriously about religion; it occupied my time day and night. I did not think that any of the professing Christians were right."

John Freeman, with his wife and son, moved from Stratford to Birmingham in July 1839. ²⁵. There he attended evangelical

24. John Steele, Diary : B.Y.U. M 270.1.

25. John Freeman, Reminiscences and Diary : C.H.O., Msd.1526.

meetings but felt himself to be "a fish out of water" for he found inconsistencies in the preaching to which he was subjected; on occasions he felt himself persuaded to political activity, at other times condemned with his fellows "as infidels and Socialists for so doing." At this time the Chartists were holding regular meetings in Birmingham at Holloway Head, the Bullring and the Smithfield. Freeman witnessed their discourse, "some of which I approved of, others I could not." He joined one of the sects, preaching in these accepted meeting places; unfortunately in his Journal he does not name the particular sect but he indicates its attraction for him : "they advocated the Golden Rule of our Saviour and the rights of their fellow creatures." However, within two years, during which time he opened his house for meetings and worship, he joined the Christian Chartists, headed in Birmingham by Arthur O' Neill, with whom he and his family lived. As O' Neill's house was used for public worship and for various schools, Freeman's active involvement as a Christian Chartist may be assumed from his residing there. In 1844, however, he heard the doctrines of the Latter-Day Saints preached "with simplicity by a sent servant of God" and he became convinced of the truth, particularly responding to the teaching of "the laying on of hands for the healing of the sick." Freeman and his wife accepted baptism in March 1844, thereafter remaining within the Church and labouring within the Warwickshire Conference, at one time under the presidency of Alfred Cordon.

While the Mormon practice of keeping diaries, journals and reminiscences, a practice advocated by the Church, has provided

a wealth of contemporary comment, it must be remembered that the authors of these personal documents which remain today only represent a fraction of the total number of British converts to the Church, and within that fraction would be many of the more articulate and better educated of the Saints. It, therefore, becomes necessary to treat with caution any suggestion that these Saints should be regarded as wholly typical of the thousands who accepted baptism. However, in a consideration of the features common to the experiences of those converts for whom records do exist, may be noted the considerable incidence of "enlightened thought," an acute awareness of inequality and social injustice which was not simply a generalization but a very personal statement, plus, in some cases, the reading of radical works and the contemplating of socialist thought. Richard Steele ^{26.} of Stourbridge had completed his apprenticeship as a potter in 1839 but then found that "potting was very bad" as he was unable to find employment. In his Diary he recorded that at the time of first hearing the teaching of the Latter-Day Saints, he "was about to join the Socialists." John Powell, ^{27.} disillusioned with the established church following the death of his mother "began to have no taste for religion" but turned to Tom Payne's Age of Reason and to the Reasoner, which he later, after his conversion to Mormonism, termed an "infidel publication". An eminent Potteries Saint,

26. Richard Steele, Diaries .

27. John Powell, Autobiography .

John Bourne, 28. undertook a mission to Banbury in 1841 where, facing the inevitable difficulty of finding preaching places, he "succeeded in getting Liberty to Preach in a Room belonging to the Chartists."

That Mormonism drew some of its followers from the fringes of political dissent would appear to be evidenced by autobiographical comment; that a variety of influential opinion concurred in equating Mormonism and the contemporary radical movements may be witnessed in the many articles in newspapers and journals where this point was made. Only a year after the preaching of the first Mormon sermon in England, a correspondent taking the title of an "Impartial Observer", writing to the editor of the Preston Chronicle, implied a connection between Mormons and Owenites.

When doctrines are advanced in direct violation of proof and common sense, and calculated to seduce the simple minded and ignorant into the source of error and delusion, it is high time for an enlightened public to speak out, to express their abhorrence of such procedure, and endeavour to arrest its progress. This remark bears upon the newly formed systems of Owenism and Mormonism. 29.

Some years later, just after the peak of Mormon membership in Britain, the Edinburgh Review, in a resumé of the growth and development of the Mormon Church, concluded that "the population of Utah presents an aspect singularly homogeneous, and has attained

28. John Bourne, Reminiscences .

29. Preston Chronicle, 18th August 1838.

(without any socialism) more nearly to the socialist ideal of a dead level than any other community in the world. " 30. Whether deliberately or otherwise, responsible journals were advancing and moulding the opinion that Socialism and Mormonism held much in common and thus fostering a distrust of the latter by its association with the former. It is, therefore, no surprise that the Judge at the trial in London of two Chartists, Thomas Cooper and John Richards, in 1843, should make the transition from radical politics to religious doctrine as he concluded that the laws of the land did "not forbid men to be Socialists, Chartists or Mormon-ites; but they are provided with penalties for those who conspire to disturb the public peace and to peril the stability of good government in the mania for propagating Socialism, Chartism or Mormonism." 31.

The links between Mormonism and radical political belief are at best rather tenuous. To this day the Church does not encourage research into the relationship, although some Mormon historians do acknowledge the existence of certain evidence to suggest that some who sought for a satisfying political creed were to find their ultimate satisfaction within the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. Whatever the popular portrait of the Mormon

30. Edinburgh Review, 1854, page 351.

31. Stafford Advertiser, 13th May 1843.

convert, advanced by contemporary newspapers and journals, the evidence of the diaries and reminiscences of those converts suggests a people, many of whom had questioned accepted beliefs, found dissatisfaction with them and considered both spiritual and secular matters and creeds. The Mormon Church while obviously administering to spiritual requirements and aspirations also advanced a programme of secular importance: it offered the adherent the opportunity to hold office in the Church; it proclaimed the necessity of emigrating from the land of one's origin and gathering in Zion; it demanded of all its members respect for the tithing system; it advocated a collective and caring response from all Saints to the varied situations posed by life. Mormonism was not a religion merely for the Sabbath; it was, as many have observed, a way of life that governed all a convert's actions. Mormonism afforded a sense of communal existence which at times, for example during emigration, approached a type of communitarianism, which may well have been an attraction to the radical thinker who sought for a sect whose doctrines combined and satisfied the political and religious aspirations held, aspirations that were frequently shown to be in conflict by the more established denominations. Although the doctrine of communitarianism experienced only limited and temporary success, it was advocated with vigour by the Church which asked of its members that they practised the Order of Enoch, whereby all individual wealth was dedicated and offered to the Church, the Saint then being leased his property by the Church and receiving what additional food and other provisions were considered as necessary for the well-being of his family. This doctrine, well known to the British Saint through the medium of

the Millennial Star was never established in the British Isles, the dispersed location of the Saints mitigating its effect; it was, however, practised by Saints of British origin who had gathered in Utah, the settlement of Orderville, providing the best known example.

Mormon doctrine, thus linked in the public mind with radical thought, made a strong appeal to many who might be termed "progressive thinkers", those who, as has been illustrated, sought among the existing creeds, sometimes holding temporary membership of a particular denomination, who moved from church to church, and among whose numbers there were some who sought for a satisfaction within the arena of temporal philosophies. What these converts held in common was dissatisfaction with the existing creeds, teachings and beliefs; they sought further. An indication of the intensity with which the search for satisfying truths was conducted may be gleaned from the Journal of Daniel Williams, 32. a Midland ironworker. Formerly a Baptist, for which church he undertook preaching duties, Williams became increasingly alarmed at "the disunion of the professing churches and the utter secularity of the Ministers of religion, among all denominations." Finding no satisfaction with the established churches, Williams and a number of similar thinkers. all of whom had been excommunicated for their forceful criticisms, established themselves as an independent group whose function was to study and discuss religious works and

32. Daniel Williams, Journal : B.Y.U. Ms.667.

matters. However, while this independence of thought and action may have possessed an intrinsic appeal, the problems of operating outside the framework provided by a denomination or creed soon became apparent, for

although we succeeded in getting a theoretical knowledge of many truths from the Bible which we knew nothing of before; how to bring these truths to bear upon our salvation, or that of others, we found not. I found that we were able to talk much, but could do little that would benefit ourselves or others, and in a short time had become a sect of talkers, who could easily upset all their creeds, but who had nothing better to offer them.

Disillusioned, Williams returned to the Baptist Church, to which he was seemingly not fully committed, for, continuing to search for truth he read Parley P. Pratt's Remarkable Visions and, this having aroused his interest, he commenced attending meetings of the Latter-Day Saints whose teachings he found compatible with his own beliefs; convinced of their divine authorship, truth and practical implications, he accepted baptism into the Church.

The experience of Daniel Williams and similar thinkers, "primitivist seekers" after truth, refutes the assertion that the early converts were merely dupes of unscrupulous ministers; rather many were people of independent mind, forceful in their assertions and beliefs, seeking for greater knowledge than that provided by the established denominations and seeking for a doctrine that would correlate religious teachings with a practical response to the problems of life.

To many Saints, accustomed to the experience of poverty and acutely aware of social inequalities, may be ascribed an anti-clerical sentiment, emanating from the considerable social distinction between themselves and the Minister of Religion. John Spiers of Redmarley, Worcestershire, as has already been cited, left the Church of England "more particularly (because of) the character of her minister than her doctrine." 33. William Williams' mother kept a school under the patronage of Thomas Philpot, the minister of the Church of England. 34. Williams was baptized a Mormon in 1840, after which he undertook a mission to Cheltenham. Upon the completion of this, in the spring of 1841, he returned to his parents' cottage, bringing with him a copy of Parley P. Pratt's Heaven on Earth. News of Williams' return reached the Revd. Thomas Philpot who, in turn, informed Lord and Lady Beauchamp, for whom Williams' father worked. The family immediately received notice to quit the cottage in which the elder Williams had lived for forty years, Mrs. Williams was dismissed from her position as school teacher. Accordingly, Mr. Philpot informed all the parish that in such manner the Lord punishes those who transgress. Further, he forbade all local people from offering accommodation to the family. In an act of supposed charity, however, he approached Williams' father and offered to intercede with Lord and Lady Beauchamp if the family

33. John Spiers, Reminiscences and Diary 1840 - 1877.

34. William Williams, Diary and Letters.

disassociated themselves from their son and refused him hospitality. The family chose to leave the district rather than be separated in this manner.

The distinction between the appearance of the established clergy and the Mormon missionary was illustrated by Henry Stokes who accepted an invitation to attend a Mormon service. The meeting was held at a private house, as was customary; Stokes had been used to large congregations. He recorded "I was again surprised at the appearance of the preacher. He was a very plain looking man and I had been used to see and hear a fine looking minister dressed in fine clothes and well educated." 35.

Among the teachings of their former denominations that particularly alienated those who became converts, was the doctrine of hell and damnation, a topic of considerable theological debate during the nineteenth century, the traditional view of horrible punishment associated with hell conflicting with those Biblical passages which seemed to emphasize universal salvation. John Needham was repelled by the Methodists who "preached so much hell and damnation," 36. while Fredrick Weight of Gloucestershire was disillusioned by an Independent minister who preached that if men "did not believe in Christ, as soon as they were dead they would be in Hell's torments forever and ever. He (the minister) also said there were children in Hell not a span long, and that there was a

35. Henry Stokes, Reminiscences.

36. John Needham, Autobiography and Diary.

clock there which said 'Ever-Never, Ever-Never, Ever Damnation, Never-Salvation'." 37. The most poignant reference to such teachings, however, was related by John Powell. 38.

My mother continued sick. I visited her every day, she being confined to bed for a long time. My father being religious, fetched the minister of St. John's Church to talk about religion to my mother. My dear mother was a very kind and noble lady. She was born a perfect lady. She could not hold with religious cant and hipocracy of the day. So when Mr. Jones, the minister, presented himself before her, she would not hear anything he had to say, and so dismissed him. My father who had left the sick room asked Mr. Jones what he thought of the state of my mother's soul. He said he thought there was no hope for her. These words sank into my heart. I loved my mother. My mother was going to Hell to be tormented forever, and my father, my brother and sisters going to Heaven. I thought if this be true I would not give much for religion. From this time I began to have no taste for religion.

That many converts to religious bodies undergo a crisis experience that precipitates their membership of the particular body has long been accepted as a truism. This phenomenon holds for converts to Mormonism as well as for those who chose other denominations. Some were motivated to find security in a religious doctrine by the death of a close member of their family. Joseph Argyle, who later became a member of the first handcart company, experienced the death of his first son in 1849 and his

37. Frederick Weight. A life History of Frederick Weight : U.S.H.S., A1721.

38. John Powell, Autobiography .

consequent reflections led to his becoming a member of the Church. 39.
George Morris witnessed the deaths of both his wife and only
daughter in 1841:

The bereavements caused me to feel sorrowful, to reflect much about religion, to read the scriptures, and to pray for light that I might understand the principles of Salvation. I had always been earnestly engaged seeking after the truth; I had made a practice of attending as many of the meetings of the different sects and parties as I could get to, of identifying myself with several of them, and of enjoying myself pretty well for a short time with each of them. I learned in a very short time about all they professed to know about religion and it came far short of satisfying me. I had visited all the sects and parties around the country within reach and had concluded to stand aloof from them all for I considered that they were all lacking the true principles of religion..... I was sitting in my shop making shoes. The door was open, and some little children stopped before the door to play. My attention was arrested by hearing them talking about people they called "dippers". They said that they dipped people over head in water and talked gibberish in their meetings, and the children tried to imitate speaking in tongues. I asked them where they held their meetings, and they said in an old room up town and pointed it out to me. So I made them a visit the next week and heard something at the first meeting that suited me better than anything I had ever heard from any of the sectarians. I was not very hasty in joining the church. I took time to investigate the principles of the gospel pretty thoroughly, attended all the meetings that I could get to, borrowed a Book of Mormon from one of the Elders, and commenced reading it very earnestly and prayerfully. I had not read far before the spirit of the Lord bore testimony to me that it was the Truth of Heaven. 40.

39. Joseph Argyle, Reminiscences and Journal : C.H.O., Msd.340.
(Note also Alfred Cordon who turned to Mormonism upon the death of his first daughter.)

40. George Morris, Autobiography : B.Y.U. M832.

For certain other Saints, their crisis experience arose out of secular conduct and contemplation of guilt. George Thatcher, a miner from Gloucestershire, was troubled by the drunkenness that he witnessed around him and was thus motivated to seek the stability of a religious organization.⁴¹ Thomas Day, while working in a Bromsgrove button factory, experienced what he later called "a wayward life" which culminated in a number of his fellows being imprisoned following the theft of a gate. In a reaction to this shock, Day sought for a religion upon which he could base his faith; at first he became an Arminian Methodist, from which church he shortly moved when he elected to be baptized as a Saint.⁴² Of the 298 case studies that Malcolm Thorp assembled and analysed, 42 recorded experiencing a major crisis prior to accepting the authority of the Mormon Church and finding satisfaction within that body.

Wilford Woodruff's conversion of almost the entire membership of the United Brethren in Herefordshire and surrounding areas has always appeared the most remarkable single experience of conversion in the history of the Church in Britain. Upon examination, however, an insight is gained into a small homogeneous membership whose practices were very similar to those subsequently advocated by the Saints. One of the younger members of the United Brethren, Job Smith

41. George Thatcher, Reminiscences and Journal : C.H.O. Mf107.

42. Thomas Day, Autobiography:

recalled an early recollection of an act of worship of this sect.

A new sect of religious people arose and preachers went from one village to another preaching in private houses - humble cottages where labouring people lived. They called themselves United Brethren. When I became about eight years old, one of the preachers came to our cottage and received permission to preach in our large kitchen. This preacher was an unmarried female whose preaching made a very strong impression upon the room full of people. Her name was Gettings. Intermittent with her preaching were appeals for praying by the congregation individually, which took such effect upon some that praying was intermittent with preaching until time to close. Needing lodging, she accepted my uncle's hospitality. Previous to retiring she introduced family prayers, concentrating her efforts now on behalf of the family, requiring every member to do their individual duty, and it soon became my turn. I had been used to repeating the Lord's prayer every night before retiring, but that would not satisfy the zealous lady for this occasion. I was soon compelled by her entreaties to make an effort to use my own words and pray zealously for the change of heart which she had been advocating. And sure enough, it laid a foundation in my mentality for zeal in religious matters that made me a very anxious candidate for baptism in latter years. ⁴³.

In this account Job Smith described a number of aspects of United Brethren worship that could subsequently be identified as religious practices of the Latter-Day Saints. The preacher was an itinerant lay person who relied upon the hospitality of those who listened to her for her accommodation. The service was conducted within the privacy of the worshipper's home and thus the number present was limited and selective. There is a sense of a ready communication and identification between the worshippers

43. Job F. Smith, Autobiography .

and the powerful, and seemingly charismatic preacher. The revivalist practice of individual prayer, performed in front of one's fellows, is employed. All these aspects of worship were to be found within Mormon practice and so the convert in moving from the United Brethren to the Saints was not treading upon unfamiliar ground. The ordinances of his new religion had much in common with the practices of the former church; what his new association gave him were "absolutes that would give order to the social and religious chaos," 44. which was often envisaged as permeating society, and the claims of the Church to possess infallible channels of authority, a living Prophet, new revelations and additional sacred scriptures.

In many instances, those who accepted baptism into the Mormon Church were able to make the transition from their previous position to their adopted Church without losing sight of the familiar. The definition of their previous position, the question of their former religious affiliation, however, is not always readily discernible, since records are incomplete and the practices of many seekers in moving from sect to sect also add confusion. Malcolm Thorp's study identified a previous affiliation or sympathy for 280 of his case studies. As might be expected, the Methodist churches provided the greatest number of converts, seventy of the sample indicating a previous affiliation to the Methodist Church, three to the Primitive Methodists, thirty one were Baptists, seventeen Independents, while

44. Malcolm Thorp, *Op.cit.* : p. 58.

thirteen had formerly been numbered amongst the Presbyterians. Former Church of England members totalled fifty eight, initially perhaps a surprisingly high number. Other churches accounted for forty three members who subsequently became Saints. Forty one converts belonged to no specific church but in their writings gave a strong indication of being religiously inclined. ⁴⁵.

Although there is an obvious danger in assuming that this analysis is typical of Mormon membership as a whole for the period 1837 - 1852, it is interesting to see if any rationale can be developed.

Nearly a third of the converts belonged either to a minor church which might be thought of as a "splinter sect" or they had no specific affiliation, although a religious inclination was evident. Eighteen sects are, in fact, mentioned, including Aitkenites, Christian Brethren, United Brethren, Campbellites, Plymouth Brethren and Christian Chartists. In almost all cases, members would have been received into their respective former churches having already held membership of another sect or denomination. This sequence of earlier religious affiliations would have provided stepping stones for converts on their journey towards Mormonism. Many of these Saints would formerly have belonged to the fraternity of seekers. The same statement would hold for a large proportion of those without a specific affiliation, for the importance of their expressing a religious inclination

45. Ibid. p. 60.

should be noted, as suggesting the desire for a religious framework upon which to base their lives, again the sense of a quest for religious truth and authority.

Arguably the most interesting aspect of the analysis is the number of former Anglicans who were converted, this figure exceeding twenty per cent of the overall total, a figure which might appear surprisingly high, for Mormon converts have more readily been associated with dissent rather than with the Established Church. Yet, in rural areas especially, there is evidence of Anglicans deserting that church for the teachings of the itinerant missionaries. In Herefordshire the Revd. W. J. Morrish of Ledbury and the Revd. John Simons of Dymock, both of whose parishes provided many Mormon converts, published three pamphlets warning parishioners of the dangers and evils of this new religion.⁴⁶ Morrish reminded his adherents that "one of the duties which I solemnly engaged to perform when I was ordained a Minister of God by the hands of a Christian Bishop was 'the Lord being my helper, I would drive away all erroneous and strange doctrines contrary to God's word' - to lift up my voice in warning, against all errors calculated to injure the souls committed to my charge." He denounced the Book of Mormon and particularly the finding of the golden plates and

46. (i) The Latter-day Saints - A few Words of Warning,
Rev. W.J. Morrish.

(ii) The Latter-day Saints - A Second Warning,
Rev. W.J. Morrish.

(iii) A few more Facts, Rev. J. Simons.

The above pamphlets were printed by J. Gibbs, Ledbury.

warned parishioners of what he felt were the false teachings of the Latter-Day Saints. Anglican ministers elsewhere were equally vociferous in their attacks upon Mormonism, a number of ministers and rectors actually petitioning the Archbishop of Canterbury with the request that Parliament should consider passing legislation to prohibit the Mormons from preaching their doctrine. 47.

The greatest number of converts, however, came from the major non-conformist denominations, as Samuel Richards, President of the British Mission, testified when giving evidence to the Select Committee of the House of Commons on Emigrant Ships, in 1854. When asked whether the Latter-Day Saints principally recruited from the Church of England or other churches he replied that although such records were not kept "it is more from dissenting bodies than from the Church of England." 48. During the early years of the British Mission, there is evidence to suggest that many of the dissenters who accepted membership of the Mormon Church came not from the main body of Methodism but rather from the splinter groups who had established their independence from that body. P.A.M. Taylor argued that the counter propaganda campaign undertaken by Methodists against the Saints deterred members of the former church from defecting; Mormon converts came, then, mainly from the splinter groups. 49. This contention is supported by Owen Chadwick who likewise felt that Mormon converts were drawn from "splinter-

47. Robert Mullen, Op. cit.: p. 57.

48. Report of Select Committee of House of Commons on Emigrant Ships : 5th July 1854, Question 4999.

49. P.A.M. Taylor, Op. cit. : p.38.

Methodist" and splinter-Baptist" groups. 50. Although as Samuel Richards observed, records of previous affiliations do not exist, there is sufficient evidence in the early diaries and journals of individual Saints to give weight to the premise that the splinter-groups provided considerable numbers of converts during the Mission's infancy. However, as the Mormon Church matured and developed, it could well have been the case that more recruits came from the main body of Methodism. Following the initial successes of the Saints, the non-conformist chapels closed their doors to Mormon missionaries and thus the Saints were forced to resort to the more traditional revivalist practices, in particular the open air meeting. Ironically, the Methodists, by closing their pulpits to the American missionaries, may indirectly and unwittingly have advanced the Mormon cause, for they created the situation where the new doctrines would be heard by greater numbers of the inquisitive who would be drawn to the open air meetings. Thus it is possible that among the wider audiences were persons from the mainstream of Protestantism.

Especially in provincial newspapers, the Mormons were given the reputation of being unschooled and unskilled, doing the most mundane of work, farm workers clad in smock frocks or labourers devoid of any manual skill or dexterity. Unfortunately - as with their prior religious affiliations - records of the employment of Mormon converts do not exist, excepting for those who recorded their trades or occupations in their diaries. However, statistics do remain for the vast majority of male adults

50. Owen Chadwick, The Victorian Church : London, 1966, Vol 1, p.436.

who emigrated, since shipping records listed their employment.

One of the earliest of these records was obtained by a contemporary of the Mormon pioneers, Henry Mayhew, who approached Messrs. Pilkington and Wilson, shipping agents, for a list of the occupations of Mormons who had travelled on vessels handled by that company throughout a six month period during 1850 and 1851.⁵¹ Out of 352 emigrants, presumably exclusively male and adult, 108 were unskilled labourers; the remaining 244 consisted of farmers, miners, engine-makers, joiners, weavers, shoemakers, smiths, tailors, watch-makers, masons, butchers, bakers, potters, painters, shipwrights, iron-moulders, basket makers, dyers, ropers, paper makers, glass-cutters, nailers, saddlers, sawyers and gun makers. Mayhew's sample, then, indicates that approximately thirty per cent of the emigrants were unskilled; conversely seventy per cent encompassed a range of occupations where skill had to be mastered.

The most detailed analysis of the occupations of Mormon emigrants was conducted by P.A.M. Taylor, whose results were based upon a sample of 8,491 men and youths who crossed the Atlantic during the period 1841 to 1869.⁵² A more recent survey⁵³ concentrated upon one particular vessel, the Amazon, which sailed

51. Henry Mayhew, The Mormons : London, 1851, p. 151.

52. P.A.M. Taylor, Op. cit. : p. 150.

53. Richard L. Jensen and Gordon Irving, British Mormon Emigrants on the ship Amazon, 1863 : an unpublished paper presented at Pacific Coast Branch, American Historical Association, University of San Francisco, California, 19th August 1978.

in June 1863 from London, and which became the most celebrated of the Mormon emigrant ships, owing to Charles Dicken's visit to the vessel and the subsequent portrait of ship and passengers in The Uncommercial Traveller. Sailing from London, the Amazon was hardly typical of Mormon emigrant vessels, since a large number of those who sailed on her, forty one percent, came from the capital, yet the accuracy of the survey, undertaken by current Church historians and using the considerable resources of the Church, makes this a valuable project. As the Amazon sailed towards the end of the period covered by Taylor, comparison of the surveys is pertinent. In the analysis presented overleaf, the occupations of the emigrants are presented as a percentage of all emigrants figuring in the respective surveys.

Among the minor points that emerge from the comparison is the low proportion of textile workers on the Amazon and the relatively high percentage of boot and shoe workers but both these distinctions can be adequately explained in terms of the unusual geographical distribution of the emigrants on the Amazon for, as has been observed, a high proportion came from London and adjacent areas while there was a low representation of the northern textile centres. However, of far greater importance is the variance between the number of middle class emigrants recorded on the respective surveys and the difference in the percentage of labourers: Taylor's more extensive survey shows a considerably greater number of middle class converts and a lower percentage of general labourers than does the Amazon analysis. This distinction has given rise to the theory,

Occupational Profile of British Mormon Emigrants.

<u>Category</u>	<u>Taylor's Analysis</u> (Various sailings 1841 - 1860)	<u>Amazon Returns</u> (June 1863).
<u>Middle Class</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>
Farmers	4.9	0.9
Shopkeepers	3.4	0.4
Professional	1.7	0.9
Clerks etc	<u>1.6</u>	<u>2.6</u>
	11.5	4.7
<u>Working Class</u>		
Farm Workers	2.3	1.7
Miners	14.5	12.3
Brick and Stone Workers	3.8	5.5
Carpenters	6.7	4.7
Metal and Engineering Workers	10.0	11.1
Boot and Shoe Workers	5.8	9.8
Textile Workers	9.2	2.6
Clothing Workers	2.9	2.1
Domestic Servants	0.8	1.3
General Labourers	21.2	28.9
Miscellaneous	11.1	15.3

advanced by Taylor, that middle class Mormon converts tended to emigrate from Great Britain relatively early, leaving a residue of members which became increasingly poor and working class in composition. Since emigration patterns must have been closely linked to the ability to raise the capital necessary to effect the emigration, and since this would be more readily accomplished by the middle class, the theory is obviously feasible. The consequences for the individual branches and conferences of the British Mission would, however, be severe, since a branch could be denuded of certain of its more influential members quite early in its history; conversely, the branches of the Church in America would benefit. Given the importance of these consequences and the resultant changes in the occupations followed by the branch members in England, there would seem to be merit in assessing Taylor's theory against a series of emigration records spaced throughout the first three decades of the British Mission.

As Taylor had found, ^{54.} the detail given for various emigrant vessels varied considerably, but by searching the emigration records for vessels that sailed at the beginning of each decade, an adequate sample can be assembled and comparison made. The four vessels chartered by the Latter-Day Saints at the commencement of their emigration programme - North America, Sheffield, Echo, and Chaos, all of which sailed in 1840 or 1841 - provide a sample of 265 male

54. Taylor's sample was for the years 1841, 1843, 1848-57 and 1859-69.

converts for whom an occupation was listed. A decade later, in 1851, the Ellen, Ellen Maria, Geo. W. Bourne and Olympus conveyed converts across the Atlantic and in the shipping records for these vessels were recorded the occupations of 385 emigrants, again exclusively male. Legible records also exist for 1861 when the Monarch of the Sea, Manchester and Underwriter were chartered, the combined sample of Mormon converts whose employment was indicated being 442. To complete the survey, the records of the Constitution, which made the crossing in 1868, have been used, in default of adequate available figures for 1871; the Constitution provides a sample of 173 listed occupations. Using Taylor's definition of "middle class", the following table of results has been constructed.

Date	1841	1851	1861	1868
Sample	265	385	442	173
Middle class Occupations	21.9%	5.2%	8.5%	8.0%
General Labourers	0.4%	19.7%	20.3%	24.8%

The results of this research convincingly endorse the theory that in the early years of Mormon membership and emigration, the middle class responded quite readily to the call to gather to Zion. Further, it appears that a far greater proportion of converts during the first few years of the British Mission were of other than the unschooled class and contrary to newspaper and propaganda portrayal.

Undoubtedly, some misrepresentation of occupation did inevitably occur: for example a considerable number of "farmers" appear on all passenger lists while only certain lists indicate "farm worker" and so, almost certainly, all listed as "farmers" were not land owners or even tenants. Allowing for this, however, the general pattern of early middle-class emigration would appear beyond dispute.

Even clearer, since there is less likelihood of misrepresentation, is the pattern of the proportion of general labourers increasing throughout the period of the survey. In many instances the labouring community would require financial assistance to permit them to emigrate and prior to 1849, when the Perpetual Emigrating Fund was inaugurated, such assistance, was very limited. Among the residue of Mormon converts holding membership of British branches would be an increasingly large number who earned their living as part of the general labour force. Interestingly, a pattern similar to that for the general labourers evolves from the other largely unskilled body of workers, the miners, over this period. Only four miners figure on the passenger lists of the first four vessels to be chartered by the Church, this representing just 1.5% of the total male emigration. The figure increases to 9.4% in 1851 and a decade later some sixty nine miners are listed, 15.6% of the recorded occupations,

These figures and patterns, however, relate to the extremes of the spectrum of the emigrants' occupations; between the two may be

found the vast majority of converts, representing a considerable range of employment and trades, most of which called for some element of skill and dexterity. It must have been of such people that Samuel Richards was thinking when he advised the Select Committee that the majority of Mormon emigrants had received a good school education, although not in the higher institutions; he recommended them as "moral characters and industrious people, mechanics who will be qualified to increase and enhance the interests of the community." 55. Skilled mechanics being an important national resource, it could be argued that Utah gained at Britain's expense, for, as the emigration programme advanced, so the occupations diversified and previously unlisted trades began to appear on the shipping list. Thus, among the passengers who sailed on the Constitution were listed a printer, an oil refiner, a chemist and a goldsmith.

As the phenomenon of Mormon conversion and emigration developed and as the provincial newspapers intensified the scorn and ridicule and occasionally venom that they devoted to the converts, there did occasionally appear an article or report, approached and written with a greater objectivity, suggesting that emigrating Saints were not exclusively of the lower classes. The Times in a reprint of a report from the Liverpool Albion confided that "the class of persons thus emigrating are, in appearance and worldly circumstances, above the ordinary run of steerage passengers. The bulk of them are from

55. Report of Select Committee of House of Commons on Emigrant Ships : 5th July 1854, question 5191.

the Midland Counties, farmers and farmers' servants with their wives and families."⁵⁶. Some years later the same newspaper described an emigrating group as "principally small farmers and mechanics, iron workers and colliers and here and there persons of a better class," ⁵⁷. and by the mid 1850s it informed its readership that "persons of the middle class of life have also been perverted,"⁵⁸. thus acknowledging that middle class converts did exist, the tone of the announcement, however, being somewhat barbed. The diversity of class among the Mormon emigrants was recorded without any element of respectability being conferred upon them.

There is little doubt that in the mid-nineteenth century Mormonism drew its converts largely, but not exclusively, from the working classes, as distinct from the labouring class; however, there is a need for caution in any attempt to associate class membership and attitudes with patterns of religious belief, since references to class and class attitudes tend to evoke an emotive response. The assertion that Mormonism "drew its converts from the slums and downtrodden peasantry of Europe", being in its youth a poor man's religion, making its appeal to the underprivileged classes,⁵⁹. appears to be too sweeping, too general in its implications, although

56. Liverpool Albion, reprinted in The Times: 18th October 1842.

57. The Times: 19th September 1854.

58. The Times: 14th February 1855.

59 M. Hamlin Cannon, "Migration of English Mormons to America" in American Historical Review : 1947, p.346.

such opinion has been widely held and respected. Poverty, however, is a relative concept and, as reports ⁶⁰. at the end of the century indicated, it was a condition that more than half the Victorian population would have experienced at some time. Many Mormon converts would, then, have been familiar with the effects of poverty prior to entering the Church and many, of course, required financial assistance before they could translate the theory of the gathering into reality; others were to remain too impoverished ever to effect their emigration; yet the evidence suggests that the majority of converts, while experiencing harsh conditions, did live at a level above pauperdom. The case of John Durant of Bovingdom, Herefordshire, ⁶¹. was the exception rather than the rule and, while his early experiences depict the harshness of rural labour - he worked for a local farmer whom he described as "a tyrant and very cruel to boys" - his subsequent intimacy with the Poor House, of which he was an inmate for just five days, was occasioned by a reason other than his own abject poverty. Having partly financed his brother's emigration and anticipating his own, he was concerned about the situation of his widowed mother who would remain in England and who relied upon him for support. By entering the Poor House he was able to demonstrate his mother's condition and thus got the Board of Guardians to allow her two shillings a week in poor

60. See, for example, B.S. Rowntree, Poverty: A study of a Town: London 1902. and Charles Booth, The Life and Labour of the People of London: London 1891.

61. John Durant, 'Autobiography', in Our Pioneer Heritage : ed. Kate B. Carter, Volume 9, 1966, p.288.

relief, one shilling in provisions and one in cash. This accomplished, he emigrated.

Of the 298 case studies that he analysed, Malcolm Thorp concluded that only eight were unemployed at the time of their baptisms and the converts were "making ends meet" ⁶². This finding he cites in his argument that Mormonism was not a reflex of despair, which theory both W.H.G. Armytage ⁶³. and E.P. Thompson ⁶⁴ had at least implied by relating the harvest of converts of the late 1840s and early 1850s to the collapse of working class reform agitation and the decline of Chartism. If there had been a close relationship between social and economic conditions and membership of the Mormon Church, one would expect the pattern of Mormon emigration to resemble that of the entire national demand, since economic conditions affect the demand for emigration, but the national and the Mormon responses to emigration are dissimilar, suggesting that in their desire to emigrate the Saints were responding to influences other than those that occasioned the decisions of non-Mormons to emigrate, and also indicating that the Saints were not merely seeking a refuge against the prevailing and frequently depressing social and economic conditions, nor reacting to the decline of the working class reform movements.

62. Malcolm Thorp, Op.cit.: p. 64.

63. W.H.G. Armytage, Op.cit. : p.261.

64. E.P. Thompson, The Making of the English Working Class: Aylesbury, 1968, p.882.

The reasons given by early Mormon converts to explain their decision to be baptized and accept membership are other than these. Again, however, one needs to be cautious since reasons recorded in a diary or journal can be rationalizations after the event, the convert consciously or subconsciously desiring to project a certain image. This accepted, there was a large degree of agreement among the converts who recorded their reasons.⁶⁵ The printed word, the Book of Mormon and Parley P. Pratt's millennial pamphlet, A Voice of Warning were important sources of inspiration and guidance to many who joined the Church. The concept of authority, a living Prophet, Apostles, revelations and a priesthood open to all male members, was likewise a reason given by a considerable number, as was also the influence of the American missionaries. The overwhelming reason, however, was what converts saw as the restoration of Biblical truth, a primitive simplicity and a plainness of doctrine.

The rejection of the political and cultural values of the upper classes had been influential in the advent of non-conformity in Britain; by accepting membership of the Latter-Day Saints, the converts were, in turn, rejecting what might be considered to be middle class and bourgeois religious values and practices associated with certain non-conformist denominations - the distinction between minister and congregation or the renting of pews for example."Even

65. Malcolm Thorp, Op.cit. : p.63.

the Methodists, who had such success in the eighteenth century, had by the early years of Victoria's reign gained middle class 'respectability' and no longer were active in missionary work among the working classes."⁶⁶. In common with members of a small number of other minority sects and adherents of certain secular organizations, the Saints were asserting their independence from the mainstream of non-conformity, which reacted by reviling them, and establishing a separate stratum of religious existence. Converts were making a definite and deliberate decision to step outside the pales of what was generally conceived to be respectability, theirs was a rejection of conformity. By implication, if converts became Saints, those who rejected the teachings of the Mormon Church and clung to their "old ways," were sinners. Once the convert had been baptized then, as a Saint, he or she was already living life on a spiritual plain and could be disdainful of society's conventions; the Saint had crossed a considerable divide.

The British converts to Mormonism were, in the true sense, a peculiar people and as such they invariably, if unfortunately, invited ridicule. Vilification, however, often manifests itself in a false representation and this would appear to be the case with many contemporary articles and descriptions, which have subsequently been regarded as authentic portrayals. Contrary to the popular nineteenth century opinion, which has lingered into this century

66. James B. Allen and Malcolm Thorp, "The Mission of the Twelve to England" 1840 - 41: Mormon Apostles and the Working Classes " in Brigham Young University Studies : p.514.

also, Mormon converts were not, in the main uninformed and unintelligent dupes, the easy prey for American missionaries. They were predominantly working class but the factors common in the backgrounds and experiences of many identify them as the progressive working class, mechanics and artisans who would advance the communities, which grew on the banks of the Mississippi or the deserts of Utah, and take a major role in the cultural activities of these settlements. Three quarters of them were dwellers in the industrial centres of Britain, where the existing churches made little impact. Many had moved from sect to sect, finding no lasting satisfaction in the teachings of the established churches; religiously inclined, seekers after truths, some having experienced the secular philosophies of political dissent, they awaited a doctrine such as Mormonism, they anticipated the coming of the missionaries and provided a rich harvest for those who preached the new religion which was primarily a way of life, a gospel of practical daily living, which emphasized "that both a new way of salvation and greater financial security awaited those who embraced the gospel of the last dispensation,"⁶⁷. and which particularly satisfied the yearning for a fundamental, primitive simplicity; "conversion did not come out of a religious vacuum."⁶⁸. Anti-clerical, they welcomed the new missionaries with whom they readily identified

67. M. Hamlin Cannon, Op.cit.: p.436.

68. James B. Allen and Malcolm R. Thorp, Op.cit. : p.515.

and whose arduous role made a strong appeal to converts who had developed an awareness of social distinction and resented it. Yet their conversions were reactions to the unsettled religious conditions of the mid nineteenth century rather than a reflex of despair.

Had the Uncommercial Traveller not known that the eight hundred or so emigrants that he observed that day in 1863 aboard the Amazon were Mormons, he conceded that he would have thought them "the pick and flower of England."

I went on board their ship to bear testimony against them if they deserved it, as I fully believed they would; to my great astonishment they did not deserve it; and my predispositions and tendencies must not affect me, as an honest witness. I went over the Amazon's side, feeling it impossible to deny that, so far, some remarkable influence had produced a remarkable result, which better known influences have often missed. ^{69.}

69. Charles Dickens, Uncommercial Traveller: p.193.

CHAPTER 7.

OPPOSITION AND PERSECUTION.

A Creed that has a book, a Prophet and Apostles, that has built cities, peopled waste places, caused thousands to leave their native land to go into a country they know not, has in it a force that cannot be put down by the roar of guns or the hissing of geese. 1.

A corollary to sectarian growth is the manifestation of opposition, for as sectarians order their lives in accordance with their faith, so they inevitably excite the enmity of those whose beliefs they challenge. The intrusion of Mormon missionaries into the turmoil and confusion of the volatile religious scene in Britain in 1837 and the remarkable success achieved by these men, certainly invited reaction from established denominations, whose congregations were enticed to defect and whose tenets were assaulted by the new teachings transported from America. The same response, however, pertains to all new doctrines which threaten an existing order; it is a dilemma which all sects and philosophies must face if they are intent to prosper and propagate. Yet this expression of antagonism against the Mormon Church was excessive even in an age when religious protest frequently took the form of violence and riot and when representatives of religious bodies were often subject to abuse and ridicule. The Mormons, both missionaries and converts,

1. Birmingham Daily Press, reprinted in the Millennial Star: Vol. 19, 30th May 1857.

excited a condemnation that in its more violent manifestations was second only to the perennial cries of "no popery" that reverberated spasmodically throughout the period and brought them both a publicity and a notoriety that their initial numbers would hardly merit.

From its conception Mormonism was a distinctive sect; for Mormons "religion" encompassed much more than it did for many of their contemporaries.² It provided for its adherents a theology, a morality, an eschatology and an economic and political philosophy. The Book of Mormon, given, it was claimed, by divine revelation to Joseph Smith, was central to the distinctiveness and set Mormons apart from any other sect. The doctrine of the gathering with its consequent implication that those who ignored this teaching would be consumed in the fire of Babylon directly challenged and contradicted all existing sects and denominations, indicating the falseness of their beliefs and premises. Mormonism provided for the religious, economic and political needs of its membership; it offered a progression through this world and the afterlife; by bestowing the title of Saint on those who came forward for baptism, it linked the two existences, confirming an elite status upon converts and segregating them from mere "gentiles". Whilst in its practices it held much in common with revivalism and orthodox evangelical movements, its separateness was of much greater importance and brought it the notice

2. Leonard Arrington and Davis Bitton, *Op. cit.* : p. 62.

and the condemnation of both secular and religious bodies.

Prior to and contemporary with the early years of the British Mission, the Church experienced persecution in its various settlements in America. In the country of its origin, Mormonism had excited the animosity of its neighbours and the pattern of this reaction could readily be transposed upon the British experience: the emergence of a new religion whose adherents were enthusiastic, active and growing in numbers confronted the tolerance of orthodox Protestantism whose own members were assailed by the missionaries of the new order. In the forefront of opposition to the Mormons, were to be found the ministers of other churches who were not prepared to countenance the decline in their own congregations without retaliating.

This was seen in the initial incursion into an established congregation in England, that of the Revd. James Fielding in Preston, who withdrew the offer of his pulpit to the missionaries once he appreciated that their teaching could have an impact upon his flock and who thereafter actively opposed Mormonism. In America opposition was frequently directed by Protestant ministers who saw the need to protect their congregation and their interests and who were, no doubt, repelled by the introduction of the Book of Mormon and the revelations which Joseph Smith claimed to have received; in England, for identical reasons, ministers of all Christian churches were active in their opposition and orchestrated confrontation. In both arenas the patterns of clerical opposition were similar: the

Mormons were invited to defend the authenticity of their sacred book and teachings in public debate; pamphlets were produced and circulated denouncing Mormonism and particularly linking the content of the Book of Mormon with the fictional work of Solomon Spaulding, alleging that the former was a plagiarism; Mormon services were interrupted by mobs led by ministers who employed both verbal and physical abuse; the persons and property of practising Mormons were threatened by mobs directed by ministers of religion. The pattern of opposition was highly predictable and reinforced the determination of both parties, the Mormons translating aggression as both the fate and testing of a chosen people. They identified their persecution with the sufferings of Christ, his Apostles and the Patriarchs, as Bishop Edward Partridge articulated at an early date: "from this we learn that those who have the Spirit of Christ never persecute, but are always persecuted, as we may learn from both sacred and profane history".³ Persecution provided a greater sense of rightness and identity to the persecuted whilst further encouraging the perpetrator; once commenced, there was an inevitability about the increasing confrontation.

The extreme violence of the American experience - the total destruction of communities - was avoided in England, the development and social conditions of the two countries being so different. In England, whilst physical abuse was a frequent occurrence, the opposition

3. Ibid : p. 64, quoting Bishop Edward Partridge (1834), letter to his parents.

to and persecution of Mormons was conducted with much greater subtlety and sophistication, landowners and clergy often combining to exploit the economic vulnerability of the convert, threatening him with loss of home and work unless he relinquished membership of the Church. Parents were incited to disown their children or risk losing their livelihoods; brother turned out brother to remain in employment. In English society it was the individual Saint who was victimized; in America the entire community was often threatened by the anti-Mormon lobby and the mob it employed.

In both countries the value of the printed word was early recognized by those who wished to suppress the growth of the sect. The tract and pamphlet were powerful weapons especially as these tended to change hands many times and thus had an extensive circulation. Books denouncing the Mormon Church and which had been printed in America found their way to England, Eber D. Howe's Mormonism Unveiled (1834) being the earliest of these. It was the newspapers, however, that proved the most virulent, representing the conservative viewpoint which the teachings of the Church opposed. National newspapers reprinted articles from local journals which usually mocked adherents, establishing the myth that Church members were exclusively from the lowest class of society. The Times for example, recorded the arrival of missionaries in Fife where, in response to "the superstitious, delusive and absurd notions inculcated by the American saints," a "few ignorant and silly minded individuals" were converted. ⁴.

4. Fife Herald, reprinted in The Times : 17th September 1841. see also Chapter 6, "Midland Mormons", p. 262.

Local newspapers gave prominence to the views of both clergy and landowners whose letters enjoyed the freedom of the journal, editorial comment was frequently devoted to the condemnation of the missionary activities of the Church, whilst in the reporting of court cases, usually brought for assault upon Church members, a bias was often discernible. During the early years of the mission, journalistic comment relied upon the subjective; a more rational commentary was not generally forthcoming until well into the mission's second decade in Britain and specifically after news of the successful founding of Salt Lake City had been received. This news and the report of the 1851 Religious Census which advised that ministers of established churches and sects could learn from a study of the enthusiasm and organization of the Mormon Church, gave the first intimation of the possible respectability of what was still a comparatively new body, and by the mid 1850s a more considerate approach to Mormonism may be distinguished in the more liberal newspapers. During the infancy of the mission, however, newspapers and journals were used as agents for inciting opposition to Mormonism and in some cases actively encouraged the use of violence by aggrandizing those who led or orchestrated the opposition whilst ridiculing and vilifying Church members; in this respect, the American experience was repeated in Britain.

In a number of ways Mormonism confronted entrenched opinion, especially in its teaching the merit of dedicating one's wealth to the Church and merely requesting the provision of whatever resources were necessary for one's immediate needs, the residue being used at

the discretion of the Church. Such communitarian doctrines were anathema to established British society which responded by showing the pauperdom that had or would overtake people who were prepared to hazard all and rely upon the fairness or generosity of Church leaders. Opponents of Mormonism often concentrated upon what appeared to be the more secular doctrines of the sect, although for adherents there would be no distinguishing between the sacred and the secular. In America the fusing of all activity into religious experience had threatened established communities; in Britain it challenged the premises upon which social order relied. That the landed class and the clergy should oppose Mormonism is, therefore, readily understood, as are the comments of magistrates who likened Mormons to Chartists and socialists. The more riotous of protests, whilst instigated by orators of the upper orders, relied upon the proletarian mob for their effect, however, and thus there existed an unlikely and unacknowledged alliance, even if only momentarily. America had witnessed a similar experience when those who comprised the nucleus of the mob were often occasional or seasonal workers ⁵. who enjoyed the prospect of disorder and the pleasure they could gain from persecuting others. In urban Britain a similar section of society existed, prepared to permit its affections to be attached to any enterprise that afforded excitement and entertainment, ready to oppose any group who appeared vulnerable, irrespective of sect or political affiliation.

5. Leonard Arrington and Davis Britton, *Op. cit.* : p. 56.

The majority of missionaries who came from America must have witnessed in more extreme form the pattern of opposition and persecution that Church members were to experience in Britain. Indeed, events in America had tested and proved the fitness of these men to undertake the mission for which they had been set aside. Now for British converts, confrontation was likewise to pose a test of their faith and discipline, isolating them from other sections of society yet uniting them within their own sect, providing a sense of unity with their American brethren as they shared in common the rigour of persecution.

In rural areas, Mormon converts were especially vulnerable as their choice of labour was limited, their accommodation was determined by and dependent upon their employment and they were isolated, for rural branches lacked the numerical strength of certain of the established urban branches and members were, therefore, not afforded the mutual assistance of their fellow converts. In many instances they received little contact from the travelling elders who could only occasionally visit the really isolated communities. Under these circumstances apostasy was a frequent occurrence, which in turn placed greater pressure upon those who remained loyal to the Church and conducted their lives in accordance with its doctrines. In such villages the influence of the landowning class and the clergy encompassed all activity and to oppose either was to place in jeopardy one's livelihood and dwelling and to hazard whatever security existed.

William Williams ^{6.} experienced this coalition in the parish of Maddressfield. Following a protracted conversion, he was ordained a teacher and attached to the Pale House branch of the Church on whose behalf he preached some eight times per week, before being set apart for a mission to Cheltenham. There he witnessed the effect that persecution could have upon converts, for, in this spa town, Mormonism was opposed by Methodists, Calvinists, Unitarians, Trinitarians and "all good old Fashioned Christians," who tried to "put us down by argument if they Could but if not by force but as the law protected us in the free exercise of our Religious Liberty they Could only by mean devilish acts injure those that were Poor that is the Clergy of the Church of England and the Lords of the Soil the Aristocracy of the Land." Such acts by those who collectively opposed Mormonism in this instance do appear to have achieved some measure of success for, as Williams conceded,

We seemed to get Strength each step we took but we had yet a lesson to learn we Seemed to have forgot there was a Sifting time to come That the net when it was cast into the Sea gathered good and bad fishes we were astonished that Some as Soon as Persecution were offended and would go no more with us I soon began to See why this was and asked the Lord for Strength to keep me faithful to the End That I might be Saved.

Following a period of illness, in the spring of 1841 he returned to Maddressfield, anxious to be reunited with his parents. His

6. William Williams, Diary and Letters. (A more detailed account of this incident is given in Chapter 6, "Midland Mormons," pp. 281 - 282).

return to his parents' cottage was attended by various neighbours from whom report of Williams' homecoming and his gift of a Mormon pamphlet reached the minister of the parish, the Revd. Thomas Philpot, who exercised considerable influence with Lord and Lady Beauchamp, for whom the elder Williams laboured. On the following Monday the family were given notice to leave their cottage and Mrs. Williams was dismissed from her position as teacher at the dayschool and at Sunday school. Additionally, a neighbour, Hannah James, who had had conversation with the Mormon convert, was also dismissed from her employment. The Revd. Mr. Philpot "went round his Parish and told all People see how the Lord Punishes those who listen," and instructed parishioners not to rent any property to the Williams family, warning them that if they did, they also risked contamination.

Other Midland Saints attested to their losing employment once their religious affiliation was known by their employer: John Needham ⁷. recorded his dismissal which occurred very early in the mission, in April 1838; Thomas Day,⁸. a manual labourer, was employed in the building of a school house attached to an "Episcopal" Methodist chapel, which employment he lost when the minister threatened to revoke the contract unless Day was dismissed.

George Wilshire ⁹. of Cheltenham was given notice of dismissal from his post of butler, once his membership of the Latter-Day Saints

7. John Needham, Autobiography and Diary.

8. Thomas Day, Autobiography.

9. Millennial Star : Vol. 11, 1st September 1849.

became known to his employer, who conceded that he had no other grounds for dissatisfaction.

I have no fault to find with you in that respect; you are a good servant and I will give you a good character; but I was brought up in the established church, and my father was a minister in the same; therefore I could not think of keeping a servant in my house who was not a member of the church; consequently I give you notice to leave my service this day month, or before if you can suit yourself.

The vulnerability of the individual, his exposure to persecution and the threat of economic sanctions being taken against him were encapsulated in a report from the Shropshire Conference as late as 1862. Its author, William Hopgood, acknowledged that for rural Saints dispersed over a wide area, the problems were exacerbated as their isolation made them prone to abuse.

There has been much opposition to the spread of the Gospel in this Conference for many years. The Ministers of the Established Church, having influence with the farmers and landowners, exercise great power over the people. Many who are not numbered with us say they believe in the principles we preach, but they are afraid to join the Church, for by so doing, they would lose their work, and perhaps be turned out of house and home, which has been the case with some that have loosed their fetters which bound them, to worship God according to the dictates of their own consciences. One brother, after having had notice to leave his work and house, was told he might stay if he would only close his door against the Elders. He refused the kind offer, and had to leave. 10.

10. Millennial Star : Vol. 24, 14th June 1862.

Three years later, in May 1865, the Staffordshire Conference, with which Shropshire had by then combined, organized a campaign based upon the villages of Cheswardine and Sambrook; as the local newspapers announced, the Mormons were coming to contend for their faith. The campaign appeared to meet with success as new members were recruited, and the practice of Sunday preaching at Sambrook and the neighbouring villages of Woodseaves and Hinstock established.

The Saints felt the benefit of coming a distance to sustain the Elders in preaching; honest, believing people invited and entertained the Elders at their houses, and everything looked promising, when lo! the bright horizon of our fair prospects was suddenly be-clouded, the awakened persons began to thunder anathemas upon us, our tracts being taken possession of, and others left in their places, such as "Beware of Mormonism", "Owen's Experience", "Mormonism and its Author", etc. One clergyman in particular has bestirred himself amazingly; houses which before were not graced with his presence or his tracts, have been carefully seen to. The poor cottagers in Sambrook have been told plainly they must not attend our meetings nor receive our tracts, on pain of losing their cottages, their work, or any other benefits, the conferring of which his reverence could influence. ¹¹.

The minister of the Established Church invited the Temperance Society to hold rival meetings to those of the Mormons, using the facilities under his control. Additionally, motivated by the challenge of the Mormon Elders, he increased his own Sunday services from two to three. When a local publican offered the use of an old wagon to the Saints for them to adopt as a preaching platform, the

11. Millennial Star : Vol. 27, 5th August 1865.

minister exercised such control that the offer was withdrawn. One convert, George Brown of Sambrook, the tenant of a grocery shop received notice to quit his dwelling; others seeing this example, became "so scared that very few of them will receive our tracts". The minister of Woodseaves implored landowners and employers to dismiss any in their service who openly sympathized with the missionaries or their converts, whilst a colleague, the Revd. Henry Caswell put pen to paper and produced a tract supposedly exposing Joseph Smith as a thief, adulterer and murderer.

Early Mormon preachers frequently had to contend with ministers of other denominations interrupting their services. In the Potteries, a Methodist minister, John Jones, was particularly active and commanded a mob of considerable size. Alfred Cordon, attested to the interest of Jones and his following, recording that on 7th January 1840, whilst conducting a service in their preaching room in High Street, Burslem,

I was opposed by John Jones who was full of Wicked Spirit as well as the People they began to be very rough Someone took a Candlestick of the nail that it was hung upon and threw it at me but it did no harm a lighted candle was thrown at me and caught me in the Bosom another caught George Simpson on his side they pushed bro William Bradbury about and someone hit him in the mouth Yet for all this we rejoiced because it was for the Sake of the Gospel of Christ. 12.

Later in the same month Wilford Woodruff, at the end of an act of worship, was opposed by Jones who took the floor and read a pamphlet containing extracts from Mormonism Unveiled and other anti-

12. Alfred Cordon, Journals.

Mormon works circulating and originating in America. 13. Jones' intervention on this occasion was not accompanied by violence, his verbal dispute with Woodruff sufficing. His most successful exchange with the missionaries, however, he reserved for Theodore Turley, who was imprisoned in Stafford Goal upon the word of the minister. 14.

Some established ministers relied upon tried and more passive methods of opposing the Saints, in their confrontation favouring public debate on matters of theological interest. At Market Drayton, a Wesleyan minister, named Jebbs, interrupted Cordon whilst the latter was preaching and challenged him to substantiate his belief in the power and virtue of Mormonism, by giving those present a sign. 15. Elder Osmond Shaw, who accompanied Cordon, responded to Jebbs' demand, requesting that the Wesleyan explain to those assembled why, since he already professed a belief in the Bible, he required a sign to verify that in which he already believed. Jebb's response was to propose a public debate, at which the missionaries would attempt to prove the veracity of the Book of Mormon. The venue for the debates - there were two, on 20th and 27th July 1841 - was the Wesleyan Chapel in the town, which on both occasions was full. Cordon recorded that the audience contained representatives of many of the denominations plus two Church of England ministers. The debate centred upon the

13. History of the British Mission : entry under "Diary of the British Mission".

14. Theodore Turley, Reminiscences and Journal : See also Chapter 2 "The Founding of the British Mission: the Apostolic Missions", pp.95 -96.

15. Alfred Cordon, Journals .

Mormon contention that, following his resurrection, Christ appeared in America; if Cordon could convince those assembled of the truth of this teaching then, by implication, Joseph Smith's revelation of the golden plates had been upheld. Few, if any, opinions would be changed by attending the debate but at least the occasion was far removed from the disorder that accompanied the breaking up of Mormon services.

In the same year a debate between a temperance lecturer, Mr. Cluer, and a Mormon preacher, Mr. Curtis, was arranged in the Temperance Hall, Cheltenham, and recorded in a newspaper of that town. 16.

The preacher had that morning been convicted of blasphemy and bound over to appear at the sessions; but notwithstanding this, he had the audacity to come forward and attempt to "prove that we are taught in the Bible to expect the Book of Mormon or one like it". Mr. Cluer, in the second place, "proposed to prove, in opposition to a statement by the preacher, that the Gospel had been preached during the last 1,700 years". The discussion commenced at 7:00 and the room was crowded to suffocation. Curtis attempted to prove from Ezekiel Chapter 37 verses 15-20 that the Book of Mormon, was predicted in the Bible; but beyond this, he did not offer a tittle of evidence in proof. This infamous proposition was refuted by Mr. Cluer and the arguments of the preacher scattered to the winds. After three hours had been expended in talking, the discussion was adjourned till Wednesday evening. The whole dispute might have been settled in three minutes, if Mr. Cluer had given an exposition of the passage quoted by the preacher, instead of defending the general principles of Christianity.

The formal debates represented the restrained face of the nineteenth century religious confrontation, affording a hearing to both

16. Cheltenham Chronicle : 20th May 1841.

parties and the opportunities for both to claim a victory in their respective journals; both opinions received publicity but it seems a reasonable assumption that those attending merely had their own beliefs confirmed. Sadly it was in the emotional arena of public preaching, which so often gave way to violence and personal, physical abuse, that the greatest impact was made and conversions undertaken; the revivalist enthusiasm of the Mormon preachers was best received in this environment, but the missionaries had to make payment for their success, in terms of the persecution they had to face.

In Ellesmere, Shropshire, the Primitive Methodists engaged a preacher, to oppose the Mormons. ¹⁷. The preacher undertook a series of lectures and "created no small disturbance," there being "many wonderful tales against this sect for they was every where spoken against I thought from what I had heard that they were the strangest people living." Emotions were so fermented in the town that when a party of emigrating Saints assembled to commence their journey to America, the house in which they met was besieged by a stone throwing mob and a number of the Mormons, including women in the party, were assaulted. In Leamington at a public meeting organized by the Church, "a gentleman, in his great zeal for the Pope of Rome," struck the Mormon preacher and, continuing the assault, attempted to remove him forcibly from the platform. ¹⁸. Eventually, after a series of meetings had been similarly

17. Charles Smith, Journal .

18. Millennial Star : Vol. 6, 1st April 1846.

interrupted, and the fixtures and windows of the building broken, the Mormons felt the need to apply to the local magistrates for their tormentors to be restrained; this was effected but, at the request of the magistrates, charges were not pressed. Another Mormon preacher, John Spiers, a Worcestershire convert, recorded a similar experience whilst addressing a meeting at Leominster. 19.

When I was preaching a man named Shinn arose and read the Spaulding tale from a pamphlet and made some remarks opposing the work and slandering the authorities of the Church. I arose to reply but my voice was lost amid the cry of pull him down stop him etc to so great a height did they carry out their opposition and noise that the whole town seemed on a confusion and I was guarded to my lodgings by two policemen. I received orders from the police not to preach in the Market any more but afterwards I obtained leave to preach providing it was by daylight.

By the mid 1850s, the major-Mormon conferences could boast membership figures that must have given the established denominations considerable cause for concern. Church meetings witnessed huge audiences and leading American Saints, continuing in the tradition of the apostolic missionaries of 1837 and 1840, were set apart to undertake missions to Britain and consolidate the work of the British converts. The success of the Mormon Church, however, did not discourage their detractors and the eminent American missionaries were not accorded any greater civility than their British counterparts. Orson Pratt and Ezra Benson, both of whom had been appointed to the select position of Apostle, were the speakers at a public meeting held during 1857 in

19. John Spiers, Reminiscences and Diary .

the Music Hall, Birmingham, an occasion for which the organizers claimed an audience of 1200, two thirds of whom were Church members. Uproar ensued when Pratt developed his discourse to encompass the redemption of Israel, the meeting being "vulgarly and outrageously interrupted." 20. Even a speaker as practised and poised as Pratt was forced to abandon the platform, the hall then being taken over by the protagonists of the opposing factions in the audience who pursued the debate in a manner neither orderly nor seemly and provoked comment from the Birmingham Daily Press.

Birmingham has a character for being as liberal and free a town as any, but there is still in it men who substitute clamour for argument, and "rowdyism" for reason. The Mormons engaged the Music Hall, that two of their Apostles might expound the creed of the benighted unbelievers in their sacred mission. Whatever we may think of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, and however much we may prefer the Saints of the former days, we cannot but respect earnest propagandism on the part of those who believe they have important truths to communicate. We saw the notice of this meeting and sent one of our reporting staff to set down what was said, with the intention of affording to ourselves a text on which to found some consideration of the strange phenomenon, "Mormonism". Instead of order and rational silence, riot and noise prevailed. Some Brummagem boobies thought that they were serving morality and truth by rude questions and noisy interruptions, and the meeting had to be broken up; and no doubt the Latter-Day Saints marched off with a sense of martyrdom, to record that evening's row as another item in the long list of persecutions to which they have been subjected.²¹.

Paradoxically Birmingham, a city proud of its reputation for liberalism, was to figure in many of the most violent expressions of

20. Millennial Star : Vol. 19, 30th May 1857.

21. Birmingham Daily Press, reprinted in Millennial Star : Vol. 19, 30th May 1857.

anti-Mormon feeling that were witnessed in this country. Various incidents of assault upon individual Saints and the interrupting of Mormon services culminated in a series of riots in 1857, the intent of which was clearly by intimidation, threat and physical abuse to break up what had developed into the largest conference within the mission and arguably the most influential. Birmingham claimed by the early 1850s a membership exceeding two thousand; it had purchased or leased chapels formerly the property of other denominations; its geographical position gave it a strategic importance in the national development of the Church; its success attracted the attention of clergy and laymen and incited their enmity. The ingredients for conflict were present, they awaited the catalyst which came in the form of an evangelical preacher, Dr. Brindley, who favoured the outdoor meeting. During the summer of that year the Mormons found themselves under siege.

For several weeks the Sunday and week-day meetings of the Saints have been interrupted by unrulymobs, who, not content with giving the preachers the lie, howling and whistling during the singing of hymns, and growning with unwanted fervour during prayers, have even pelted the members of the congregation with stones and mud on their way homewards. On the afternoon of Sunday last, a man named Thomas Horsley, on leaving Allison Street Chapel, was seized by a crowd of people who tore his coat in pieces and treated him in such a manner that he had to place himself under the protection of a policeman. He got into a cab, hoping thereby to escape, but the mob followed him as far as Islington-Row, hooting at him and pelting him and the cabman with stones. On Thursday night, a man named Rose, one of the deacons of Thorpe Street Chapel, was beaten with sticks and otherwise roughly handled by a crowd which had assembled in the neighbourhood, where, we may remark, hundreds have nightly gathered for several weeks, with the view of disturbing the Mormon meetings. It was here that matters reached a climax last Sunday evening. Dr. Brindley

had been lecturing on the iniquities of Mormonism nearly opposite the Chapel. We don't know whether his text had been the words we found chalked on the door-way of the Chapel yard, "Brigham Young has got forty-two wives, damn him " but we understood he indulged freely, as usual, in depicting the grosser accusations ordinarily brought against the ruler of the church in Salt Lake City. His discourse closed about eight o' clock. Though a few of the more respectable looking of the Doctor's hearers left the street when he did, the great majority remained, and the crowd numbered not less than fifteen hundred or two thousand persons of both sexes. A rush was at once made to the Chapel, where President Aubrey was preaching at the time. The aisles and unoccupied seats were speedily filled, and then a running fire of comment on the sermon was commenced, and carried on by the intruders for five or ten minutes. Much of the language would have disgraced the lowest pothouse, and at last Aubrey abruptly closed his discourse, pronounced the benediction, and dismissed his flock. It was with great difficulty that they forced their way through the crowd in the Chapel yard and in the street. The women were hustled, insulted and bespattered with mud; the men had their hats knocked off, and were pushed from side to side; and hootings, oaths, tin-kettle harmonies, etc., lent completeness to a scene such as is not often witnessed in Birmingham on a Sunday evening. The police were sent for and quiet was partially restored. However, as soon as the constables had gone away, the door of the Chapel was burst open, the crowd rushed in, the front windows were smashed, and the mob conducted themselves as they liked for nearly half an hour. 22.

The following day the Chapel was again broken into, cupboards were ransacked and their contents, namely music and school books, were torn into fragments and strewn about; the mob remained in possession of the building throughout the day. During the evening, a reporter from the Birmingham Journal was dispatched by his newspaper to the Chapel; he reported that it was showered with missiles, the

22. Millennial Star : Vol.19, 22nd August 1857.

stones rattling through the smashed windows. To the proprietors of the Birmingham newspapers, the stoning of the Mormon Chapel and the abusing of the Saints was also an assault upon the liberal reputation of the city: "Mormons are observers of the law; they seem to live as decently moral lives as their neighbours of the same class; they do go through forms of worship, which may be more than many of their assailants can say; they have Sunday schools, day schools and other means of enlightenment which the Book of Mormon cannot altogether overpower. And the law of the land must give them the protection which it accords to all "religions," pretended or genuine. There must be no more religious bonfires in Birmingham." 23. The ambiguity of Dr. Brindley's position was noted : whilst he exhorted those who attended his meetings to refrain from violence, the size and venues of his meeting militated towards that end as did his energetic language.

Dr. Brindley was not prepared to let such journalistic comment pass without demonstration. On the Wednesday of the same week he addressed a crowd estimated at between 1200 and 1500 who assembled at 8.00p.m. at the rear of the Town Hall to hear his response to the report. He moved that the article was a false representation of what had occurred and in this he was overwhelmingly supported by his audience, many of whom, agitated by the address, marched on the Cambridge Street Chapel of the Church, showered it with stones, breaking some eighty windows and damaging the locked gates to the building, apparently intent on assaulting those within. Only the intervention of the police force

23. Birmingham Journal, reprinted in the Millennial Star :
Vol. 19, 22nd August 1857.

prevented this, it being necessary for policemen to remain stationed in Cambridge Street for some considerable time.

The Birmingham Journal in particular had adopted the role of sage throughout the riots, being simultaneously indulgent towards and critical of both Brindley's followers and Mormons. It advocated that allowance must be made for the plain speaking with which the Mormon delusion had been assailed in the city; a latitude was necessary in dealing with Mormonism since "the deluded class is not very accessible to the influences of the ordinary appeals to the reason, employed to convince men of their mistakes and because the nature of the sensual attractions held out as an inducement to proselytes cannot be exposed without reference to the abominations to which the system necessarily leads." 24. An indulgence in riot, however, was an overstepping of the limits of acceptable behaviour; Dr. Brindley, the "self-elected local Luther" should realize that in playing upon the emotions of his audience, his actions were similar to those of his adversaries. Yet Brindley had "done good service by an outspoken denunciation of the errors and practices of the sect. Fired with enthusiasm common to all zealous men, he has taken to the streets "exciting" the feelings of a certain class of the people not only against the doctrines of Mormonism but against the person of Mormons, and the usual result has followed, the personal safety, the property and the free action of men who held the obnoxious opinions are put in peril." By his persecution of the Mormons he had ensured a

24. Birmingham Journal : 1st August 1857.

sympathy would be excited in their favour; his actions, therefore, were neither a means of ensuring that Mormonism was overcome, nor were they politic. Dr. Brindley's arguments that his exposition and the incidence of riot were unconnected, the newspaper concluded, were fallacious, since "after the Wednesday harangues, as after that of Sunday, a riot did take place, the rioters being those who composed his audience, the sufferers those against whom denunciations are directed." The article concluded with a consideration of the role of the police throughout the series of riots, asking "how is it possible that outrages like those in Cambridge Street and Thorpe Street can be committed in a town professedly under the care of an expensively maintained force of police. Let a Royal Duke visit us, and we have a parade of the force that carries terror and admiration, as the case may be to every mind; a circus attracts a bevy of police large enough to fill the reserved seats; even a photographic booth on Gosta Green can command the protecting aid of a couple of full privates; and yet a riot can take place in the centre of town, a mob may take possession of a Chapel and hold it for hours, men and women worshipping God, as they think, may be hooted, pelted and their lives imperilled, without interference, and without a single offender being taken into custody." The Birmingham Journal, somewhat sanctimoniously, rested its case: it had upheld law and order yet offered an implied criticism of police inaction; it had exposed the false teachings of the Mormons yet permitted them the right to continue their practices and worship; it had castigated the mob for the violence of their involvement yet allowed that in dealing with the Latter-Day Saints it was occasionally necessary to resort to actions which would normally be unacceptable;

it had praised the motives of Dr. Brindley yet condemned their consequences; it had presented an article of exceptional journalistic talent yet maintained a position of remarkable ambivalence.

Contemporary with Dr. Brindley in Birmingham was the Revd. Dr. Miller, in whose parish the worst excesses of anti-Mormon violence had occurred and who also accepted the opportunity to preach in the streets of the city; there, however, similarities ended, for whilst Dr. Brindley's skill was that of the orator and agitator, Dr. Miller was conciliatory in manner and represented, in person and text, an alternative to the vehemence of political oratory. Deeply regretting the hatred which had been manifested, yet anxious to acquaint the working classes with what he felt was the true nature of Mormonism, he reminded his open-air congregations that the physical abuse of the persons or property of those whose opinions one opposed was "in direct violation of the principles of Christ's religion. It was not to be propagated nor was error to be encountered by physical force. Birmingham had had more than enough of religious riots. He had hoped that in Birmingham the last stone had been thrown in religious strife, the last blow struck." 25. He reminded his audience that if Mormons could suffer assault, then, upon the same principle, Roman Catholic and Protestant, Churchman and Dissenter, might similarly persecute one another. Arguments and differences should be concluded by prayer, reason, moral and spiritual persuasion, not force and tumult.

Any consideration of the orchestrated opposition to Mormonism

25. Birmingham Journal : 1st August 1857.

must take as much note of Dr. Miller's rationale as Dr. Brindley's harangue; whilst the latter was good press and claimed a notoriety, the former must have been repeated on many occasions in many locations and would often have passed unnoticed. They represent two removed points on the spectrum of opposition; they illustrate the complexity and range of the confrontation; to omit either is to deny the complicated variety of experience that embraced the British Saints.

Edwin Cox, of Somerset origin, was baptized into the Mormon faith when eighteen, in 1857. His autobiographical record recounts, in a series of vignettes, a sequence of incidents in which he was exposed to the hostility of his fellow men. ²⁶. In Newport, Wales, he was entrusted with the distribution of tracts, a task which led to a very personal confrontation.

At one house in particular I went and knocked at the door and the Man coming out, I asked him very politely if he would accept a tract. he took it and glanced at the title and said wait a minute. he then returned to the room, and came back with a red hot poker in his hand and holding it close to my face said take your book and if you attempt to bring any more such trash as this here I will shove this poker down your throat. now clear out, and as he was a powerful looking fellow, and looked about as fiery as his poker I took him at his word, and never called there again.

The out-door meetings which were held twice a week during the summer months posed a similar threat, for Cox and his fellow preachers were invariably insulted, abused and maltreated, it

26. Edwin Cox, Record Book : B.Y.U. M. 270.1.

becoming "a matter of courage to venture out to preach." Neither was there respite at work, for his workmates, having witnessed the treatment accorded to Cox when preaching in the street, extended the insults and ridicule to the work environment, causing him considerable difficulty and suffering. Rejected on the door-step, in the street and at work, Cox turned his attention to family and home, assuming that parents would be sympathetic towards his vocation and wish to follow his example. In this, he made his major miscalculation, for his parents were scornful of his acquired belief and, in response to his many letters in which he attempted to convert them, "they requested that the subject drop, on pain of our letters being burnt before they were read, adding that they should always be very glad to hear of our worldly affairs and prospects, but would certainly not read anything of our nonsense, also if we continued in such wickedness the longer we kept away from home the better they should like it." His rationalization of his parents' position contains an interesting insight into rural superstition and practice, for he recalled that in his infancy, his parents had frightened him with tales of the Mormons, and a pending visit by the Saints ensured that the village children felt a fear of their lives.

Rejection by one's immediate family, the most difficult rejection to accept, is a frequent occurrence in the diaries and journals of the early British Saints. John Bourne, who was to become a major figure within the Potteries and the Black Country branches of the Church, was given notice by his sister either to

leave her house where he resided or reject his religious affiliation; 27. he chose the former. A similar experience was narrated by one of Wilford Woodruff's converts in Worcestershire, John Spiers, who, subsequent to his baptism, was so ridiculed and abused by his brother that he felt obliged to leave the family home, in doing so accepting the role of full-time preacher, labouring in the mission field and relying on the charity and generosity of his fellow Saints for sustenance. 28. Whilst those who experienced verbal or even physical abuse from their immediate family argued that they gained spiritually from the trial, the act of rejection was, no doubt, most difficult to accept and endure and, in terms of suffering, would far outweigh the impersonal abuse inflicted on the door-step or at an open-air meeting by a stranger; for many it was the moment of passion.

Persecution may employ many guises and the stories of assault and abuse are numerous in the diaries and journals of both missionaries and converts; amongst these guises, however, physical intimidation is the most common experience. In contrast to the American narrative, in Britain there was no instance of physical assault being the direct cause of death, although Mary Ann Maugham, a Gloucestershire Saint, claimed that a violent attack upon her husband contributed in no small measure towards his death. She had been largely influenced by the

27. John Bourne, Reminiscences .

28. John Spiers, Reminiscences and Diary .

teachings and presence of Wilford Woodruff when he visited her village and she offered herself for baptism which Woodruff undertook at midnight, using the village pond for the service there being "too much persecution for it to occur at any other time." 29.

Shortly afterwards she married a fellow Saint on 23rd December 1840, Joseph Smith's birthday. There being no other Saints living within the vicinity of their home, they were requested by the Church to offer it as an open house for preaching by itinerant missionaries and duly did so, but their isolation exposed them to persecution. In shielding a Mormon preacher from the mob which had assembled to disrupt a service, her husband exposed himself to the anger of those intent upon intimidation. He was severely beaten and kicked and his widow claimed that the internal bruising he suffered that day, combined with a fall he experienced shortly afterwards, brought about his death, which occurred within a short time of their marriage. Mary Ann Maugham's accusation can neither be answered nor substantiated but, as violence became commonplace and Mormons increasingly faced persecution, there is no reason to doubt her account of the assault upon her husband. Physical abuse was endemic, anticipated by many, interpreted as a test of their devotion and accepted philosophically and, by some, even lightly.

Last Sunday week I went to preach in the evening at West Bromwich. A mob gathered outside, and made an awful row. A stone, a little larger than a ducks egg hit me a heavy blow, which waked me up. 30.

29. Mary Ann Maugham, Diary: C.H.O., Msd. 6402.

30. Millennial Star: Vol. 25, 19th September 1863, report by Elder John M. Key.

Occasionally, alleged instances of violence against the Saints were referred to the local bench of magistrates for judgement. The legal response was often more revealing of the persons making it than of the plaintiff; the judicial eye was known at times to lack impartiality, a quality that was also often missing in the reporting of these cases. At Shrewsbury on the 26th January 1854, John Mayer, "one of the elders of the misguided followers of Joe Smith," ³¹. brought a summons against five local residents for disturbing the Mormon congregation during their worship. Formerly the Saints had held their service in the evenings but intimidation had forced them to meet only during hours of daylight; now this was denied them by a mob, forty or fifty strong, led by the defendants, which had acted in such a manner - shouting and stamping their feet - that religious observance was impossible. On the occasion in question the Mormons had met in a private house occupied by one of their number, Henry Humphries, having abandoned their usual meeting place in an attempt to achieve anonymity. The opposition, however, sought out the house, made a great disturbance and tried to burst open the door, in consequence of which Humphries felt obliged to ask for the protection of the police. After deliberation, the bench "declined to interfere in the matter."

Also unsuccessful in an attempted prosecution was Joseph Howard who, before a Birmingham magistrate, Mr. Kynnesley, accused an apostate Mormon, Daniel More, of assault. ³². Howard alleged that on 14th July

31. Eddowes's Shrewsbury Journal : 1st February 1854.

32. Birmingham Journal : 29th July 1857.

1857, in Cromwell Street, Birmingham, More had attacked him without provocation, beating him with a stick, tearing his clothes and threatening his life. In defence More claimed that there had been animosity between the two for some considerable time, he having seceded from the Mormon Church twelve months earlier and his wife a little later. During the period between the two secessions, Mrs. More had been approached by Howard's brother, a Church Elder, who had requested donations and had attempted to entice her to leave her husband and journey to the Salt Lake Valley. Howard denied any involvement in trying to induce Mrs. More to emigrate but accepted that whilst she had remained within the Church he had spoken to her as was his duty. After taking evidence from a witness, Richard Freeman, who supported the defendant's contention that Howard had struck the first blow, Mr. Kynnesley dismissed the case. On the evidence of the report, such conclusion would appear reasonable, yet throughout there is a suggestion that the proceedings lacked strict impartiality: Howard's evidence had been interrupted by the bench who informed him "We don't want any of your sermons here," and the defending counsel had extracted much mirth from his various questions about Mormonism.

A case heard at Newport County Court on Wednesday 8th March 1854 before Judge Uvedale Corbett and a jury excited considerable interest in the neighbourhood of Wellington, Shropshire, for it involved a local dignitary, a surgeon from that town, John Francis Steedman, who was accused of assaulting Thomas Williams, a thread-

finisher and member of the Mormon Church.³³ The trial had been moved to Newport on the grounds that it could not proceed at Wellington, where the alleged offence occurred, without prejudice to the plaintiff. Mr. A.S. Craig appeared for the plaintiff who claimed damages of £50, Mr. Smallwood for the defendant.

Mr. Craig commenced the case by disclaiming any sympathy for the doctrines in which his client believed; he was present "to uphold the principle of our constitution that a British subject was not to be assaulted, beaten and persecuted because he differed from another in religious belief." The facts of the case were not contested: on 1st January 1854, Williams had called at the house of the defendant in Park Street, Wellington, to leave a tract with the occupant; he had been invited into the house, conducted into a room and then commenced to discuss the doctrines contained in the pamphlet. He had professed his faith in miracles, in the gift of tongues, which he had personally received, and in the gift of healing. Steedman had then struck him over the left eye, telling him to get that healed. Subsequently Williams was kicked several times until "the room began to reel;" when he rose he was kicked and struck further, eventually being kicked out of the front door. Henry Shaw, who was also distributing tracts, helped Williams, who by this time was vomiting blood. Consequent upon the beating, Williams was unable to undertake any work for a month. Various witnesses were called to substantiate Williams' narrative.

33. Eddowes's Shrewsbury Journal : 15th March 1854.

The interest in this case, however, lies with the address to the jury on behalf of the defendant, for, whilst the defending council, Mr. Smallwood, conceded that the assault had taken place, his address was an attempt to justify the action.

Mr. Smallwood then proceeded to address the jury on behalf of the defendant, and in the course of his observations stated that what had occurred had not been occasioned by animosity against the plaintiff, or any wish to interfere with his particular notions, or to crush by means of brutal violence the particular tenets advocated by him, but it had resulted solely in consequence of the indignation felt by the defendant at the invasion of his privacy by a man who preached and otherwise disseminated doctrines of the horrible nature admitted by the plaintiff to be held by him and his sect. Although he was not there to say that the jury could find for his client, or that his conduct in the case was such as ought to be pursued, still he would ask them to make some allowance for human nature, and to remember that, ourselves, we were all erring beings, and that there were sometimes occurrences that caused men to forget themselves, and in the heat of momentary passion to do what they would not under more favourable circumstances. The plaintiff was a member of the Church of Latter-Day Saints called Mormonites, and with regard to their doctrines, so long as they confined them to themselves and did not attempt to make proselytes in our very families, no one would quarrel with them; but when they preached up doctrines destructive to every principle we had been taught from infancy to hold sacred, when they ridiculed all that we had been taught to cling to as the foundation of our hopes of immortal blessedness, when we found these hypocrites coming to the houses of our wives and children for the purpose of disseminating doctrines of the blasphemous and filthy character that are admitted by the plaintiff, it was only natural that a man should be a little roused, and that he should teach them by means the most tangible to their obdurate minds that they should not with importunity thrust their obnoxious publications into our very houses; and if under such circumstances his client had exceeded the bounds of propriety, it was somewhat excusable. Every Englishman's home is his castle, and he is justified in protecting his hearth from any viper that may attempt to infest it, whether in the shape of a Latter-Day Saint or anything else. Mr. Smallwood admitted that the defendant might have acted indiscreetly, but denied that he was actuated by any malignant feeling towards the plaintiff.

What would any of the jurymen do as a father and a man, if he found a person in whom all sense of decency was lost, disseminating at his home such doctrines as those admitted by the plaintiff? The verdict he knew must be adverse to his client, but he thought a very moderate amount of damages would be sufficient to meet the circumstances of the case.

The judge summed up; the jury returned a verdict for the plaintiff; damages of £5 were awarded, one tenth of the amount asked for by Williams' counsel. The cynic could put the price of physical assault at £5. More important, however, Mr. Smallwood in his address had suggested that whilst assault offended the principles of British law, it was understandable if a person, claiming to be personally offended by the doctrines of an alien sect, chose to demonstrate that offence by resorting to violence.

The argument for the defence was seized upon as establishing a right beyond any principle written in law; Steedman had acted honourably in defending his home against invasion, in insisting upon his right to privacy. The editor of one local newspaper, the Shropshire Conservative applauded Steedman's action and even turned its attention to Williams' counsel, Mr. Craig, regretting that "a gentleman of his standing in society should, for lucre, undertake the cause of this wretched blasphemer;" Mormons had no right to be represented in court, their religion placed them outside the boundary of justice.³⁴ To illustrate the interests and opinions

34. Millennial Star : Vol 16, 1st April 1854. The extracts from the Shropshire Conservative are taken from this issue of the Millennial Star; unfortunately no copy of the newspaper appears to have survived.

of its readers and "to exhibit its detestation of the abominable practices of the Mormons," the newspaper opened a penny subscription to pay Mr. Steedman's liabilities; the surgeon was accorded the status of hero with whose views and actions the editor readily identified. Reporting these sentiments in the Millennial Star, its editor offered the repost, "If such generous souls had lived in the days of Jesus, they would doubtless have raised a penny subscription to defray the expenses of his crucifixion, and the editor of the Conservative would have vindicated the subscribers."

As far as we can recollect, this is the first recognition in an English newspaper that physical arguments are commendable in opposition to the doctrine of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. From the spirit of this extract from the Conservative, we might be led to suppose that physical arguments are considered by Salopian editors and "gentlemen" as arguments of the most convincing kind, notwithstanding that most of the editors and gentlemen consider that when a man resorts to physical arguments, it is a sure sign that he can produce no other kind of argument. It is natural, too, for all men to employ the best and most potent arguments they command in support of their opinions. We conclude that the hero of the Conservative employed his best arguments when he invited a tract distributor into his parlour, carefully shut the door and window, and then assaulted and battered the unoffending herald of the Gospel of Christ. Most potent arguments, indeed! Some arguments are seldom employed, except against the truth. ³⁵.

Generalizations about the role of the authorities when confronted by the challenge of Mormonism are spurious. There were

35. Millennial Star : Vol. 16, 11th February 1954. (The editorials in the Shropshire Conservative and the response in the Millennial Star anticipated the court hearing).

obviously instances when the impartiality of magistrates or police might be questioned; there were many more recorded occasions when both institutions received praise and thanks from the Saints. The award of £5. in the case of Steedman's assault upon Williams would be of the former variety but from this there should not develop an assumption that Mormons were denied the protection of the law. All that can be determined is that there were instances when prejudice might be discerned in judicial comment, such as the Judge who observed that the laws did "not forbid men to be Socialists, Chartists or Mormonites; but they are provided with penalties for those who conspire to disturb the public peace and to peril the stability of good government in the mania for propagating Socialism, Chartism or Mormonism,"³⁶. and thus linked radical politics and religious innovation in the minds of those who listened to his comment. A similar, seemingly injudicious, observation came from the pen of Captain D.L. St. Clair, a prolific writer to local newspapers and a Cheltenham magistrate. On one of his excursions into print he observed that "having carefully read and investigated the writings of the Mormonites, I am fully convinced that the main object of these persons is to engender a bitter, fanatical feeling, and by alienating the lower order from the sympathies of the wealthy, to extricate true Christianity as a preliminary to revolution." ³⁷.

36. Stafford Advertiser : 13th May 1843.

37. Gloucester Chronicle : 21st November 1840. Letter from Captain D.L. St. Clair to the editor.

In none of these instances is there any attempt to pervert truth or justice; there is, however, a distaste, a fear and a prejudice, however unwittingly it resided in the mind of its author, and, given the influence of these men, there is a danger of partiality in judgement.

Against the expression or inference of prejudice need to be placed the many occasions when the Church received an exemplary service from the local magistrates and was afforded the protection to which it was entitled. Frequently magistrates interceded when the Saints had suffered persecution. In West Bromwich gratitude was expressed to the bench who guaranteed Church members the right to worship without interference: "the magistrate in that part is a man, and dare do his duty." 38. At Leamington where the police had broken up crowds who had stoned the Mormon chapel, and had arrested the two leaders of the mob, both of whom were severely reprimanded by the magistrate, the Church recorded its appreciation: "the conduct of the authorities of this town has been praiseworthy, and I here thank them in the name of the Church, for their kindness in protecting us in the rights of Englishmen, as we can now hold our meetings in quietness." 39. Likewise, Church members had many occasions on which to be grateful to the police and readily expressed their thanks. Elder Sylvester Earl recorded one such happening. On 24th September 1854, the Saints

38. Millennial Star : Vol. 25, 19th September 1863.

39. Millennial Star : Vol. 7, 1st April 1846.

had hired a large hall in Shrewsbury for the Shropshire Conference to assemble. Once the meeting had commenced, a large crowd gathered outside and threatened to enter the hall." The brethren applied to the police, who went to the place as requested, quelled the mob, staid during the services, and then stated that any time protection was wanted, it would be given on application. Just as it should be, when the righteous are in authority, the law abiding people rejoice."⁴⁰. In 1862 the Herefordshire Conference reported that they found little or no opposition from outsiders, as "by having recourse to the law and obtaining an impartial administration thereof, our enemies sustained a proper defeat, since which time all things have been strictly peaceful." ⁴¹. In the same year a similar report was received from Edward Cliff on behalf of the Warwickshire Conference.

We have reason to know lately that the feeling of the authorities in this place is more favourable to the Saints now than it was some time ago.

For some years past the Saints have been subject to annoyances at their Sunday and week night meetings, by a band of evil-disposed persons, who have collected round the meeting house, thrown stones at the door, and insulted the Saints as they came to and returned from the meeting. After trying in vain to stop these proceedings ourselves, we at last concluded to appeal to the civil authorities, and accordingly obtained a summons for one of the most prominent, who as soon as he became aware of it, left the town, and has not since returned, leaving his friends to pay expenses. Since then we have been permitted to meet together in peace, and I believe we shall not be troubled again at present, the magistrates having directed the police to see that we were unmolested in future. ⁴².

40. Millennial Star: Vol. 16, 21st October 1854.

41. Millennial Star: Vol. 24, 15th March 1862.

42. Millennial Star: Vol. 25, 28th June 1862.

The police authorities were apparently co-operative from the earliest days of the mission; throughout the first four decades of missionary activity the Millennial Star advances no instance of prejudice in any action involving the police force; the only suggestion of a fault is that they might have been negligent in not appreciating the danger of the Mormons' situation during the Birmingham riots of 1857. Elsewhere there were occasions when Mormon preachers were interrupted, having commenced street preaching, but such interventions provided protection to the Saints whilst ensuring law and order: James Palmer recorded his having to abandon addressing an audience in the public street in Cheltenham ⁴³. and John Spiers had a similar experience in Leominster market, although he was later permitted to preach in this venue during the hours of daylight, when the police could guarantee his safety. ⁴⁴. However, the most interesting anecdote of this nature relates to the experience of J.W. Young, one of the sons of Brigham Young, who, following his father's example of twenty seven years earlier, undertook a mission to Britain in 1867. On 2nd June he addressed a meeting in the Bull Ring, Birmingham, the best known location for public meetings in the Midlands, where, following the disruptive conduct of a section of the audience, the constabulary were obliged to intervene and discontinue the meeting. The prophet's son accepted the request

43. James Palmer, Reminiscences .

44. John Spiers, Reminiscences and Diary .

of the secular authority. 45.

Whilst the police appear to have discharged their duties with impartiality, newspapers, almost unanimously traded in invective and prejudice. The earliest reports of Mormon activity and the opposition mounted against this sect set the tone for subsequent articles of the next two decades at least. Thus the Preston Chronicle, reporting a lecture by the Revd. William Giles on the Book of Mormon delivered during January 1838, referred to the minister's talk as "the exposition of one of the most flagitious, and audacious impositions, which has ever been promulgated since the creation of our world,"⁴⁶. he had proved the Book of Mormon "to be a composition of the most ridiculous absurdities, contradictory statements and glaring falsehoods," and had shown that the Mormons "teach doctrines and inculcate precepts not only foreign to, but in diametrical opposition to the Bible."

The same newspaper under the title "Religious Fanaticism" gave its attention to those who elected to be converts: they were "only very ignorant persons, as the glaring absurdity of the 'new revelation' on which their faith is founded, has caused it to be repudiated by those who are capable of judging for themselves." ⁴⁷. This is probably the earliest newspaper comment to label the Saints as ignorant, foolish and deceived; the myth of the illiterate convert, duped and betrayed, had appeared in print for the first time and,

45. Millennial Star : Vol. 24, 28th June 1862.

46. Preston Chronicle : 27th January 1838.

47. Preston Chronicle : 17th March 1838.

whilst not borne out by fact, the legend was to be accepted and embellished by the anti-Mormon lobby, led by a conservative and reactionary press.

As Mormonism spread southwards from Preston and the Liverpool hinterland, so the journals of rural England joined the condemnation of the sect, at first ridiculing converts then, as the Saints became more established and numerous, and thereby a greater challenge and more newsworthy, vilifying Prophet, missionary, convert and doctrine. By 1840 inhabitants of Worcestershire were being informed that

A body of impudent swindlers has existed for a dozen years in the United States, called the Mormonites. Their founder was a ne'er-do-well fellow named Smith, who has been publicly convicted of fraud, and his immediate confederates were a parcel of the most black-guard scamps to be found in the depraved debris of American population. They succeeded in deluding a number of people in America, as every outrageous scheme, either in religion or politics is sure to do; but their success excited little attention here, till to our amazement, we find their outrageous nonsense has been promulgated at our own doors, and to some extent has taken root in two places, Ledbury in Herefordshire and Dymock in Gloucestershire, where they have already contrived to do a great deal of mischief. The 'saints' or rather swindlers, profess that Jesus Christ will come down and reign with them on earth at a certain locality in America on the banks of the Mississippi. They pretend to be in possession of a book which they say was dug out of the earth, where it has lain for many hundred years: this book was written on plates of gold in an unknown language, which the man who discovered it was able to translate by the means of a certain stone. They call this the "Book of Mormon", or the Golden Bible and they feel it was hidden in the earth by God himself, and the place of concealment was revealed by an Angel. Sometimes their followers are to be conveyed to the New Jerusalem in a flying ship to alight on the top of Coombe Hill. To reason with people so far gone as to believe this trash is out of the question; their delusion will be short, and the punishment for shutting their eyes, being swindled

out of their property, sufficiently severe; but the deluders should be narrowly watched by the police and dealt with, when caught tripping, as rats or other noxious vermin are. ⁴⁸.

Whilst the legend that converts were largely illiterate, of the lowest classes and, without exception, credulous. was developed, simultaneously the caricature of the missionary as a thief, a pick-pocket and a confidence trickster was gathering momentum in the local newspapers: Mormon elders, "ostensibly fanatics, but really knaves, are carrying out their practices with success, exciting the astonishment of all reasonable men at the credulity of those individuals who can suffer themselves to be led away by the flagitious misrepresentation of such cheats." ⁴⁹. Instances were cited where British Saints sold all their possessions, entrusted their wealth to the Church, and emigrated full of expectation. The promised land materialized as the backwoods of America, and the converts became labourers upon the inhospitable banks of the Mississippi. The Worcester Guardian told of one local farmer who, having joined the Church, emigrated with his wife and six children. In Nauvoo, according to the report, every means to part them from what money they still possessed was employed, whilst none of the promises made in Britain were fulfilled. ⁵⁰. In rejecting all advances and, after a stay of only three weeks, commencing the return journey, the farmer, previously, no doubt, one of the ignorant and credulous, gained the accolade from the newspaper of "Gloucester yeoman" who was proof against the wiles of those who had attempted

48. Worcester Herald : 21st November 1840.

49. Worcester Guardian : 12th June 1841.

50. Worcester Guardian : 21st August 1841.

to cheat him.

The chauvinism explicit in this story was to be employed in many narratives. The same newspaper, reporting a public debate, alluded to the Mormon's address as "the sing-song nasal drawl of a genuine Yankee", whilst it informed its readers that the detractor spoke "in language and argument highly honourable to him." 51. In fact, this was all the more creditable as the speaker "was nothing more than a common English mechanic, having procured the only education he was in possession of at a Sabbath School" and had worked for twenty three years in a cotton factory, labouring from fourteen to eighteen hours per day. The ignomy of a nation providing so little education and extracting so much from its workers was ignored in this eulogy to the self-educated debater.

The suggestion that Mormonism posed a threat to a social order and that its doctrines held much in common with other movements anathema to the public good was advanced in articles, editorials and correspondence, the last of which was given prominence in many provincial newspapers. Captain D.L. St. Clair's pronouncement that Mormons wished "to extricate true Christianity as a preliminary to a revolution" was not without its supporters, amongst whom might have been the correspondent to the Cheltenham Chronicle who, following

51. Worcester Guardian : 12th June 1841.

his study of the sect concluded .

I have little doubt from the similarity to those of Puseyism, Popery and Socialism, that Jesuitism is at the bottom of it all, and this opinion is strengthened also by finding it worked out to such an extent in the dark, for, ask anyone you meet, and they will imagine them to be an obscure sect, and would scarcely credit the fact of their having a name, but we suddenly find them possessed of several churches, and active in levying supplies for further increase. So few then are aware of its extent, while, like Jesuitism in all its bearings, finding now that it is strong enough to emerge from its hiding place, this sect is daringly venturing into the towns and even cities and commencing opening its career of deceit. The consideration of the evil which may be caused, among the poorer classes especially, by these unprincipled marauders in extorting money will, I trust, induce the Newspaper Press, in every part of the country, to warn their readers against being inveigled by these absurdities, and thus a wholesale system of robbery and plunder may be prevented. 52.

The newspaper article or editorial, however, was a more subtle vehicle than the pen of correspondents whose minds could embrace Puseyism, Popery, Socialism, Jesuitism and Mormonism simultaneously. The innuendo, the insertion of the odd word calculated to alarm the sensibility of the reader, was a successful ploy in the repertoire of certain newspapers. The parenthetical inclusion of "we believe a Chartist", when referring to a local member of the Church 53. or the similar qualifying of a preacher, "For the last two or three Sundays a chartist named Smith, a missionary of the American 'prophet,' has been preaching at the democratic meeting room, Gloucester, desecrating the Sabbath with coarse and vulgarly familiar remarks on

52. Cheltenham Chronicle : 26th November 1840.

53. Worcester Guardian : 12th June 1841.

the most revered persons and promises on the holy Scriptures"⁵⁴. may serve as examples, and are further evidence on the attempt to link theology and politics to the detriment of both. ⁵⁵.

As undoubtedly the Mormons anticipated, given their previous experiences in America, various practices of their faith received the attention of the press; adopting the styles of outrage, levity and ridicule, articles attempted to denigrate the sect by exposing the practice. Speaking in tongues, therefore, came under scrutiny. A report of a meeting in Lugwardine, Herefordshire, tells of some forty Saints assembling in a cottage where they were addressed by three preachers, one of whom claimed that he had witnessed eight persons in the neighbourhood receive the gift of tongues, of which number a young lady had spoken in fluent Hebrew. A non-Mormon who attended confronted the preacher, asking how he could verify that the language was Hebrew when, the visitor assumed, the preacher could not distinguish Hebrew from Italian. The preacher confirmed he lacked this knowledge and thus, to the satisfaction of the newspaper, the claim was exposed and Mormonism dealt a blow.⁵⁶. Similarly, the laying on of hands to help cure the ill was given considerable coverage. Two recorded instances of Saints administering to a dying convert, who shunned professional medical care, were reported in detail, the inquests upon the deceased indicating the similarities in the cases. The former of these related to the death of Alice Hodgson

54. Hereford Journal : 10th November 1841.

55. See Chapter 6, "Midland Mormons", pp. 273-277.

56. Hereford Journal : 16th December 1840.

of Everton Gardens, Preston, who had been administered to by her mother, Ann Dawson, a Saint, and the Apostle, Willard Richards, both of whom were charged with causing her death. Allegedly Mormons were dispensing with medical practitioners and administering remedies, of which ginger tea and cayenne pepper were the most common, their aim, according to the prosecution being to gain financially from the influence they held over the ill. The magistrates, however, ruled that the evidence did not merit sending the defendants for trial;" at the same time they expressed their hope that the ignorant and fanatical dupes of this new system of priestcraft would see their error and abandon so mischievous and wicked a profession." 57. The second inquest was upon the body of Elizabeth Morgan, whose death was attributed to inflammation of the bowel. No medical assessment or treatment had been requested, as the Saints treated the ill according to the text of St. James: "any illness amongst you shall call for the elders of the Church and anoint yourselves with oil in the name of the Lord." Again cayenne pepper had been administered as had sage tea and leeches. The coroner in his summary felt that there was insufficient evidence to bring a verdict of manslaughter, yet he trusted that the publication of the details of the case in local newspapers "would act as a caution to the members of this strange sect, and they would see the necessity of calling in medical aid."58. In both cases the presiding authority felt a need to issue a comment on the practices of the Church; whatever their motives in doing so, both were derogatory of the Saints and provided the newspapers

57. Preston Chronicle : 6th October 1838.

58. Worcester Chronicle :10th November 1841.

with articles the aim of which was to discourage further proselyting.

A letter to the editor of the Gloucester Journal introduced a new and sinister interpretation of the Mormon ordinances of anointing with oil and laying on of hands. It warned that the practices were merely "an indelicate approach to the bed chamber of females" who now required "a timely hint as to their virtue." 59. An individual's opinion, unsubstantiated by fact or evidence, was thus published and undoubtedly assimilated by many readers who, conditioned by the mass of anti-Mormon propaganda to which they were subjected, would have no means of distinguishing truth from fiction and assume that this statement was of the former category. In an atmosphere permeated with prejudice and suspicion, where legend was understood as fact, any anti-Mormon accusation was believed and simply added to the prejudice and suspicion.

On the rare occasions when a defence of Mormonism or a request for religious tolerance was published, the response was predictable. The earliest evidence of a newspaper receiving an approach from the Saints, was an editorial in the Preston Chronicle of October 1838, when a correspondent using the pseudonym "Candidus" had challenged the editor to explain the apparent contradiction of disallowing religious controversy to appear in the paper's columns, while admitting many articles against Mormonism. The editorial reply was that "if Mormonism were in the proper sense a 'religion', we should have to yield to the strictures of Candidus, but as it is a wicked and mischievous

59. Gloucester Journal : 14th November 1840.

forgery, set up to mock and undermine true religion, we think it quite legitimate to expose and denounce it, in the same way we should do any other vicious institution. We have, therefore, not admitted a religious controversy into our columns, we have simply endeavoured to unmask a fraud and to free religion in the eyes of the public, from any appearance of base association, however remote, with the impiousness called Mormonism." ⁶⁰. This followed ten months of vitriolic anti-Mormon articles. Within the Midlands the Hereford Times appears to have published the first pro-Mormon letter, in which the writer, signing himself "Justice", attacked the newspaper for terming Mormonism "an illiberal and infatuated sect." ⁶¹. His defence of the Church was simply that according to scriptural authority all religious sects excepting the Saints were in error - since they disagreed amongst themselves, they could not be in agreement with the primitive Church - and that Mormons could not be termed illiberal merely for stating this. The letter is brief and somewhat disjointed, the editor of the Hereford Times having deleted much of the original submission in his stated desire to avoid religious controversy. However, even by printing it in abbreviated form, he excited the wrath of certain of his readership. Ironically the editor received public condemnation for his liberality which, by giving Mormons the right of reply, it was argued, was a degeneration into licentiousness. No newspaper had been

60. Preston Chronicle : 20th October 1838.

61. Hereford Times : 24th November 1840.

so complacent as to suffer the followers of Joanna Southcott to defend their folly and blasphemy through the medium of its pages and, by analogy, no such offer should be extended to this later affront to established religious beliefs. The correspondent concluded with the hope that "we shall not again see the pages of a respectable publication allowed to be in any degree the advocates of so infamous an imposture." 62.

Although they were not directly cited by the correspondent, the Mormons must surely have been in the writer's mind when he complained of the practice of street preaching; certainly that inference was taken by the newspaper's editor. The correspondent had put his case succinctly: "Whilst there is room in our places of worship, preaching in the streets is both unnecessary and improper; but whatever difference of opinion there may be on this point, there can be none on the lamentable desecration of religion and the danger to passengers which the practice now occasions." 63. Presumably the writer did not advocate the offering of pulpits to those sects who by necessity preached in the open, on the streets or in the public markets; indeed he concluded his letter by observing that since the country possessed so many qualified and proficient Ministers of Religion the itinerant lay preacher should be redundant, the way in which this could be achieved being the banning of street preaching. The argument is neat if myopic. The Hereford Journal, however, saw merit

62. Hereford Journal : 2nd December 1840.

63. Hereford Journal : 31st March 1841.

in the suggestion and added its weight to that of its correspondent:
"It is lamentable to think that such persons as the Mormonites should be allowed thus to pervert religion, whilst our churches, where the Gospel is preached in its purity are thrown open weekly and daily, and the attendance of all is invited. " 64.

Those critics a little more far-seeing than the editor of the Hereford Journal and his correspondent, focused their vision upon other matters associated with and in part explaining the number of converts made by the missionaries and preachers of the Mormon Church. In particular, two related issues were analysed and debated: the lack of interest and involvement noted in certain of the clergy of the Established Church and the paucity of the provision of education afforded to the mass of the lower classes. The former of these issues had been fermented by an article appearing in the London Sun and subsequently reprinted in provincial newspapers, the gist of which had been the extraordinary growth in the membership of the Mormon Church, particularly in Gloucestershire and, indeed, within a few miles of the Cathedral of Gloucester, whose Bishop meanwhile resided in the most comfortable of circumstances.

Has this Bishop, so well paid for attending to the flock, done anything to abate this ignorance? Is it not the fact that there are not fewer than eighty non-resident clergy under him, that there are eighty six in the commission of the peace, that until lately the Chairman of the Quarter Sessions was a Reverend Doctor, that the neglect of the

64. Hereford Journal : 14th April 1841.

clergy is proverbial, that at Quarter Sessions there are frequently more clergy than laity at the dinner table; and that ignorance is so great, that not one adult in fifty of the rural population can read? 65.

Pens were quickly taken up in defence of the clergy and in praise of clerical involvement in the provision of education; the liberal author of the article might grieve for the ignorant multitude who had swallowed the falsehoods so industriously disseminated by the Mormons, but this hardly provided grounds for a charge of indolence and neglect against the clergy; the fact that among Mormon recruits were some of a superior education indicated that a better education was no protection against Mormon propaganda; "weak-minded and uneducated there will be in the world until the end of time, in spite of all the liberal schemes of education." 66. Other, less conservative minds, however, felt there to be some substance in the accusation and particularly supported the view that the remedy was to be found in better and wider educational provision. Indeed, on the occasion of a visit to Worcester, Archdeacon Onslow had addressed himself to what he termed the Mormon delusion and had concluded that such impieties could be cured by a national system of education, sanctioned by the Church. 67. Whether inspired by the Church or by the laity, education, in the minds of many, was rapidly becoming the panacea for all ills; opinion was being formed that if Mormonism or, indeed, any other sect which challenged the stability of an

65. Gloucester Journal : 7th November 1840.

66. Gloucester Chronicle: 21st November 1840.

67. Barrow's Worcester Journal : 27th May 1841.

accepted social order, was to be controlled and its activities restricted, then it became necessary to educate those most likely to offer themselves for baptism, so that they might discriminate between the doctrines of the Established Church and the apparent fanaticism of the new sect. Education might have been confused with indoctrination, but to recognize that a Church offering an alternative and attractive mode of worship and quality of life, was, in reality, a charlatan, required a certain mental agility and minds must be prepared for this exercise.

I have not the least doubt that it will require all the exertion of the clergy, of every honest man, and well-wisher to his country, with the influence of the press, to irradicate these fanatical opinions. Nothing but kindness and attention on the part of both clergy and laity will succeed; the lower classes must be taught the common principles of Christianity, which at present they do not know, and then, and not till then, will this fatal heresy pass away. Government ought to interfere; our present pond of education, as regards country parishes, is worse than a farce; it is downright hypocrisy, nothing less than cheating both rich and poor, the one out of their money, the other out of their instruction. I trust that I have now given such a brief statement as may induce others to investigate this matter, for many clergymen of my acquaintance were not aware of the poison covertly spreading throughout their parishes. ⁶⁸.

It was ironic, though inevitable, that the vilifying of Mormonism and its adherents should lead certain concerned minds to focus upon the laxities and indifference of the age. The appeal of the new sect emphasized the rejection of an established order which apparently was failing to communicate with a substantial

68. Gloucester Journal : 21st November 1840.

section of the community. The need for society to address itself to the means of remedying the evident omissions in its provision appears obvious when viewed with hindsight, yet a decade later Horace Mann felt the necessity to administer a memorable admonishment: the Mormon Church had attained "a position and importance with the working classes, which, perhaps, should draw to it much more than it has yet received of the attention of our public teachers.'

The apostate Mormon returning to the country of his birth, embittered by his experiences on the American continent, the poorer for having entrusted at least part of his former possessions to the Church, and now intent upon denigrating the sect to which he had previously belonged, was manna, perhaps not from heaven, but at least from the swamps of the Mississippi or the deserts surrounding the Salt Lake Valley, to those orchestrating hostility to the Church. Whilst the individual conferences in Britain recorded their respective acts of excommunication, it is impossible to estimate the number of former Saints who elected to apostatize and, of those who did so in America, few would have afforded the expense of the passage for themselves and their families back to their homeland. Those who did, therefore, became celebrities, forceful weapons in the armoury of anti-Mormon propaganda, yet an insignificant statistic amongst the thousands who emigrated and remained loyal to the Church. W.S. Parrott gained notoriety as an apostate during the summer of 1857: addressing an audience estimated at two thousand and including many clergymen

69. Census of Great Britain 1851: Religious Worship in England and Wales.

of the Established Church and dissenting ministers, Parrott urged the residents of Bath to "put down and stamp out" Mormonism in that city. 70. Allegedly he incited some present to vandalize the Mormon Chapel which they duly did, breaking twenty windows and threatening to set fire to the building. Two of this faction were apprehended by the police and pronounced guilty at their trial; police protection was offered to the Saints; the town clerk expressed his disapproval of the apostate, indicating that he should be taken into custody; the Church spokesman, Edward Hanham, observed that the police action was "religious liberty personified." Parrott represents the archetypal apostate who made periodic appearances — pursuing a career of venom against his or her former church, inflicting whatever damage was feasible at a given time and location, always negative and destructive, fêted for this manifestation of hatred. The Cheltenham Conference suffered two Apostates of this mould, they having defected and returned from Salt Lake City "to prejudice the Saints by telling lies about Utah and its inhabitants."71. There were, however, some interesting deviations from the generally accepted caricature of the apostate, as was witnessed during 1864 by the Birmingham Conference.

The Devil, meanwhile, is not idle - His missionaries are quite as active as the Lord's. The agents - both male and female - of the "new organization" are busy here. Some have come back from the Valley. They say the principles" are right, but "Brigham" is wrong and destitute of authority, and that Utah is not the place

70. Millennial Star : Vol. 19, 22nd August 1857.

71. Millennial Star : Vol. 26, 16th July 1864.

to gather to. The old story. The Jews could find no fault with the principles that Jesus taught, but they killed him because he claimed to have the authority to teach them. The Prophet Joseph was murdered for the same reason - and his death consented to by some of those very would - be sticklers for his Divine Commission now that he is dead. And now, "Brigham has fallen!" The fact is the Devil does not care how many "good principles" men teach, so that there is no Divinely authorized person on earth to see them carried out. ⁷².

The apostates to whom the above report refers add an additional dimension to the pattern of apostasy, since, having retained the principles of Mormonism, whilst rejecting the authority of its priesthood, they represent a seceding faction, the majority of which defected from the Church during the crisis of succession that followed the death of Joseph Smith; there is the possibility that they were members of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, the largest of the seceding groups, the one most likely to organize its own mission, and a sect that claimed loyalty to the founding principles of the Mormon Church. Irrespective of which seceding faction they represented, they were, however, yet another force opposing and challenging the doctrines and practices of the Saints; their presence in Birmingham illustrates the diversity of the contending groups and the complexity of the religious teachings with which the early Victorian was confronted. There is no evidence to indicate an extensive programme of proselytism by seceding churches; this type of incident was undoubtedly rare, yet its occurrence must have been an embarrassment, however limited its effect.

72. Millennial Star : Vol. 26, 16th July 1864.

Eighteen years earlier, the Birmingham Conference suffered an equally embarrassing occasion, the arrival of Martin Harris, one of the three witnesses of the golden plates whose testimony appears in the Book of Mormon. By 1846, however, he was disaffected and critical of the Church's authority. His request to address a meeting of the Church was rejected, whereupon he went onto the Birmingham street and began to proclaim the corruption of the twelve Apostles. The police interpreted his action as not being conducive to public order and he was consequently taken to the lock-up for disturbing the peace.⁷³ In Liverpool, a month later, he was, however, given a more decorous response and was permitted to address a council of the Church.

The malpractice of non-Mormons assuming the role of itinerant Mormon preachers, using forged licences and certificates, travelling from branch to branch where they received the charity and hospitality of members and pocketed collections⁷⁴. was a further indignity and affront to the Saints, ridiculing them and detracting from their composure and dignity. Whilst each such act would only have a local significance, the cumulative effect of such assaults upon Mormon finances and upon the integrity of Mormon organization would have proved more than an irritant; within the ambit of anti-Mormon activity, preaching and apostasy, this was yet another facet, another confrontation.

73. Millennial Star : Vol. 8, 15th November 1846.

74. Millennial Star : Vol.12, 1st February 1850.

Three issues dominated any debate or denunciation of Mormon theology: adult baptism, the content of the Book of Mormon and the revelation authorizing the practice of polygamy, the last of these particularly fuelling attacks upon the Church. Restricted in America, polygamy was never practised in Britain; to many outside the Church in this country, however, the issue came to characterize Mormon practice, often to the exclusion of all other issues, and remained the major point of vilification well into the twentieth century, although the practice was abandoned in 1890, consequent upon the receiving of a new revelation. It, again, illustrates the fusing of legend and fact; there developed an entire mythology around the contention that Mormon missionaries were attempting by devious practices to lure single females to America, where they would become plural wives of licentious elders and exist under abject subjugation. Mormon emigrant vessels were depicted as reviving the slave trade, yet analysis of those obeying the doctrine of the gathering reveals a remarkable similarity in the numbers of males and females taking passage on emigrant vessels.⁷⁵ Nauvoo, the Missouri settlements and, after 1847, Utah, were frontier environments where existence was extremely arduous, where wagons had to be converted into homes, where sex roles merged as men and women undertook identical work, where survival depended on unity when faced with an unyielding earth, the hostility of other settlers and attack from Indians. Whilst

75. P.A.M. Taylor: Op. cit. : p.146.

For the period 1841-1868 (excepting 1842) the number of adult males emigrating on Mormon vessels was 6,481; adult females numbered 6,547.

polygamy might be faulted in ethics - the 1890 revelation would support this - in the frontier environment there was a practicality about communal living, the sharing of labour, the mutual support that plural wives could give one another especially in the absence of the husband, and the protection that was afforded to the weak, the ill, the pregnant and the young.

The response of female Saints to plural marriage was undoubtedly an individual reaction: many decried the institution and gave evidence of jealousy among the wives; more suffered what they felt to be injustice and passed on to their children an hostility to polygamy and, by implication, the Church. Fanny Stenhouse's exposé of 1874, Tell it All: The Story of a Life Experience in Mormonism, explained how her contempt for the system of plural marriage led to her deserting the Church. Conversely other plural wives, including many who had been converted in Britain, testified to the merit of the practice. Among this number was Susan Witbeck who emigrated as a single woman, disembarking at New York and travelling westward to Iowa City from whence she became a member of a handcart company, receiving much support from her fellow Saints. In Salt Lake City, aged twenty, she married John Witbeck, a widower, who had three small children, and who, eight months later, with her full consent entered into a plural marriage with Emma Packer. In her Autobiography she bears "testimony to the truth of the celestial order of marriage" and implies the advantages of plural marriage as the wives shared the

labour of operating a stagecoach station in Utah. 76.

Polygamy undoubtedly had an adverse effect upon relationships between Saints and non-Mormons and it must have been a deterrent for many who contemplated conversion. The portrait of the Mormon patriarch in his bed with his various wives was an immediate subject of ridicule and many Mormon meetings were broken up with the question of just how many wives Brigham Young had taken, yet, paradoxically there was concern and enlightenment in many of the Church's statements on the position of women within its society.

What, then, should be done with those wives who have bad husbands? They should be released from those bad, brutal husbands and given to good men. Let no bad men have wives to ill-treat! Make the honourable and considerate treatment of women the first condition of a man's securing a wife, and then you will hold forth one of the most powerful inducements for the reformation of man that can be imagined. 77.

The Church recognized that many men, by their conduct, did not deserve one wife; it taught that husbands and wives, where one was Mormon and one "gentile" should not be separated because of their religious practice; it advocated that families should emigrate together rather than one partner, usually the husband, departing to prepare the way for the other family members to follow; it emphasized the merit to be found in family life. In Utah the Church advanced the cause of women: when the University of Deseret admitted

76. Susan Melverton Witbeck, Autobiography.

77. Millennial Star: Vol.15, 23rd April 1853.

its first students in 1869, of an intake of 223, 103 were female; in 1870 the franchise was given to women; two women were admitted to the Utah bar in 1872; by the end of the 1870s, female Saints were graduating from medical school. Yet women were not permitted to hold office in the Church, and the continued practice of polygamy, outlawed in America and so bringing Church and State into conflict, was demeaning to women in the eyes of Church critics and, indeed, many Church members.

Polygamy brought an infamy to the Church's reputation that far out-weighed all other issues, of which there were many. Churchmen attacked the teaching of Christ's appearing in America following his resurrection, they were cynical of the narrative of the finding of the golden plates and their subsequent translation, they repeatedly attacked the Book of Mormon as a plagiarism of Solomon Spaulding's narrative, they abhorred the practice of adult baptism, usually conducted in unattractive locations in the Saint's desire to escape publicity and the attentions of the attendant mob.

In the pulpit and in tracts clergymen denounced all of these issues. The Revd. Mr. Osbourne employed the pulpit of Darlington Street Chapel, Wolverhampton, for his outspoken comment on adult baptism.⁷⁸ In Herefordshire, two ministers of the Church of England, the Revd. W.J. Morrish of Ledbury and the Revd. John Simons

78. Millennial Star : Vol. 12, 1st November 1850.

of Dymock, whose parishes had provided many Mormon converts, penned three tracts warning parishioners of the dangers inherent in Mormonism." 79. Morrish dismissed the Book of Mormon as a mixture of plagiarism, biblical extracts plus "a sprinkling here and there of doctrines and precepts calculated to support the deep deception and wickedness of the new sect." The doctrine of the gathering he rejected as a "worldly scheme" which relieved converts of possessions and property and ensured a growing and inexpensive source of labour for Mormon settlements in America. His second tract was occasioned by his seeing "many of you still led away by these false teachers; and the only reason I can assign for it is that you do not really know the doctrines they teach." The pamphlet was developed as an exposé of certain Mormon teachings; its conclusion, however, was calculated to startle readers into a realization of the consequence of accepting erroneous teachings, namely that they led to eternal damnation. A similar conclusion was emphasized by John Simons who warned that "eternal salvation or eternal damnation depends upon this enquiry."

These early anti-Mormon tracts rely heavily for their content upon the earlier American publications and especially upon Mormonism Unveiled, Howe's denunciation of 1834. In tone the tracts are paternalistic, indulgent towards the children who through lack of education or experience have been so readily duped, yet the threat of eternal punishment awaited those who remained wayward. Whilst the church could advise of this final sanction, secular authorities opposed to

79. See Chapter 6, "Midland Mormons" p. 289, footnote 46.

the sect were more prosaic in their tracts. Captain St. Clair, landowner, magistrate and self-appointed protector of the deluded, whom the London Sun introduced as "a gentleman of the neighbourhood, who has for some time been performing the work which ought to have been done by the clergy" devoted much of a pamphlet to informing those who read it of various local people who had become paupers upon their accepting the authority and teachings of the Mormon Church. His emphasis was practical and financial as he addressed himself to the question of what the Saints did with the collection taken nightly at their meetings; ⁸⁰. throughout the document there is the suggestion of unlawful gain and fraudulent activity.

The instrument of recruitment, the tract, so advantageously employed by the Church during the infancy of its mission, was adapted by its critics to become a voice of condemnation, derision and warning, penned by both clergy and laymen once they realized the potential development of the sect and the threat it posed to their respective institutions and interests. Anti-Mormon tracts, however, possessed one common flaw, irrespective of their authorship; they inevitably implied that Mormonism was a passing phenomenon, an occurrence of limited duration. Posterity recognizes that they were in error; the sect outlived this medium of detraction and the pious hopes of its various authors.

80. Gloucester Journal: 7th November 1840, reprint of an article in the London Sun, 5th November 1840. Captain D.L. St. Clair, to whom the article refers had published an anti-Mormon tract during the same year.

Victorian England was frequently presented as a religious society; there was much religious activity and controversy but religious observance was startlingly low. It was a community, many of whose members were confused as they attempted to establish themselves in the aftermath of an industrial revolution; it was a community where dogma and uncertainty co-existed and where the tension was often manifested in violence; iron foundries and pit-heads afforded prosperity and poverty, they were the metaphors of social upheaval; rural communities had been ravished and the incentive of emigration excited the imagination of many inhabitants. It was a nation of confirmed beliefs and of seekers of political and religious creeds that might lead to salvation; it was a country where smugness and radical outrage both existed. It was a nation that awaited Mormonism and united to oppose it. The sect, however, had no monopoly of the country's enmity; other denominations experienced the weapons of opposition and persecution. Verbal assault and physical violence were not restricted to demonstrations of anti-Mormonism; riotous acts were perpetrated against the membership of many churches, buildings were fired and worshippers intimidated. Yet in an era when religious antipathy and riot were often synonymous, the Mormon Church with its distinctive doctrines, its separateness, its secular and spiritual prescription, excited an opposition which, relative to its membership, was without parallel.

The establishing of a city in the desert of Utah, the agricultural and industrial achievements emanating from that centre, the confidence expressed in the Church's emigration programme, the

maintaining of a separate identity and the refusal to become the passing phenomenon which so many had predicted, slowly effected change in the opinions expressed about the Latter-Day Saints. Gradually, the fact that Mormonism demanded serious consideration became accepted: newspaper comment graduated from ridicule to analysis, a seriousness was injected into accounts of Church activities in Britain and America; the myth that Mormons recruited only from the unskilled labouring class desisted; by 1866 Church members were publicly involving themselves in local elections, 81. simultaneously proclaiming their religious affiliation; the inclusion of Salt Lake City in Thomas Cook's American itinerary was at least a milestone on the circuitous road to eventual respectability. 82. By 1862 William Owen could report from Herefordshire that "throughout the Conference we find but little or no opposition from outsiders," 83. whilst in the same year W.G. Mills of the Birmingham Conference could inform the Church that during a demonstration against the Saints in that city he had been personally befriended by a well-known and respected local member of the Church of England, Mr. A.L. Knight, who escorted him through the ranks of the demonstrators and conducted him home. 84. The presence of branches of the Church in the midst of British communities was becoming accepted if not acceptable, the acknowledgement had been hard won, the Church had proved its ability to survive when confronted by the many facets of an opposition

81. Millennial Star : Vol. 28, 15th December 1866.

82. Millennial Star : Vol. 34, 31st December 1872.

83. Millennial Star : Vol. 24, 15th March 1862.

84. Millennial Star : Vol. 24, 25th October 1862.

that would continue into the twentieth century.

The acceptance by the Church's detractors of a permanent Mormon presence in the cities and towns of Britain was a significant achievement which made possible the eventual conferring of a qualified respectability upon the sect. The forces of opposition would confront the Church throughout the remainder of the nineteenth century and much of the next but the rapid advances in communication would guarantee that its accomplishments would be conveyed to the curious, the critical and even the apathetic. The steamship and the railway, the lecture and the newspaper purveyed the narrative of Mormon achievements in America to a British audience. In 1840 a lecture by a Church of England minister on the topic of the Mormons would have been predictable in content and effect, an assault upon the doctrines and standards of an alien sect and their gullible dupes; thirty years later a similar event could draw praise from the representative of the Established Church who had witnessed in Utah a city just two decades old, a record in brick and concrete of the aspirations of American missionaries and British converts, and a quality of life that the Anglican clergyman held in esteem.

Glad I was indeed when we alighted at the hotel of Mr. Townsend in Salt Lake City. The City of the Saints is to outward appearance, one of the pleasantest looking cities of the size in the United States: wide streets, with rivulets of sparkling water running down each side, and shady avenues of locust and other trees, forming pleasant walks. The city is laid out in blocks of 10 acres each, and each block into lots of $1\frac{1}{4}$ acres, being enough for an ordinary cottage and garden. The houses are small and neat, built of adobe or sunburnt brick,

ornamented with verandahs, balconies, and green shutters. The gardens are full of fruit trees, the Mormons being especially famed for their peaches. In the centre of the city is the Temple Block, which contains within its walls the granite foundation of the Temple that is one day to be the greatest ecclesiastical edifice in the New World - the enormous oval domed Tabernacle (or the egg shell as it is irreverently called) capable of holding 10,000 persons, and in which they have erected an organ, which they declare is the largest and finest in the United States - not excepting the big organ at Boston. I doubt, however, if Bostonians will yield the palm to the Mormons. There is also a lesser Tabernacle within the Temple (Block) walls, in which service is generally held during the winter months. The city also possesses a fine theatre, as large as some of the English theatres, and which belongs to Brigham Young, and in which some of his daughters take part. The chief street is Main Street, and in it are to be seen warehouses, and shops with plate glass windows, and stores in which you can find everything you can possibly require for agricultural or domestic purposes, from a plough share to a hair pin, from a cotton print to a tallow candle. There is no drunkenness in Salt Lake City. I did not see a drunken man in all the time I was there, nor did I taste anything stronger than coffee, and that was very weak. The hotel where I was staying was a Temperance Hotel, and no whiskey stores or liquor shops were allowed, although lately one or two small grog shops have been started in the place by Gentiles. Brigham anathematizes them, and warns his faithful ones to shun them as they would poison. There is certainly, to all outward appearances, an air of tranquility and good order in the town which you do not see in any other town of the same size. ^{85.}

During the 1840s newspaper print had warned readers that a life of slavery on the swampy banks of the Mississippi awaited the illiterates who accepted the tenets of Mormonism; in 1871 Rev. J.W. Leigh, M.A., vicar of Stoneleigh and the brother of a British peer, delivered his lecture to the Philosophical Society of Leamington Spa

85. Leamington Chronicle : reprinted in the Millennial Star: Vol. 33, 11th April 1871.

and was reported verbatim in the Leamington Chronicle.

First-hand experience replaced rumour and surmise, fact succeeded dogma; a previously reviled sect was afforded serious consideration; opposition would continue but by degrees more reasoned argument and theological discussion would be substituted for verbal abuse and physical assault. Ironically, the former agents of vilification were now disseminating to an increasingly aware audience something of the achievements of the Latter-Day Saints.

CHAPTER 8.

EMIGRATION AND SETTLEMENT.

They have toiled wearily o'er the hundreds of miles which separated their native hills from the European sea-port from which they were to embark - then see them on crowded ships braving the dangers of the broad Atlantic - afterwards, they travel patiently one thousand inland miles to Iowa City, thence to start on foot for a journey over hill, plain, desert and mountain, fourteen hundred miles to reach the "Happy Valley". This is enthusiasm - this is heroism indeed. ¹.

From the West Midlands to Zion was an arduous path that few could have contemplated without faith in a religious order or a prosperous future. The fact that thousands, including the young and aged, undertook the journey says much for Mormon determination and discipline and their belief in the doctrine of the gathering. By accomplishing their migration, the British converts contributed a very personal chapter to the chronicle of working-class endeavour and by their endurance and exploits they caught the imagination of their own and succeeding ages. Fortunately many of the emigrants kept diaries and wrote journals; many others recorded their experiences later in life. There remains, therefore, an accurate record of the minutiae of this romantic and heroic journey to augment the records of the organization of the migration and the statistics of Mormon emigration.

1. Millennial Star : Vol. 18, 18th October 1856.

The principle of the gathering was early established as a tenet of the Church, its Prophet and founder receiving a revelation only months after its organization, when its adherents were scattered throughout New England. From its inception, the gathering served a number of ends: it was primarily a religious doctrine demanding a response from those who had offered themselves for baptism; it was a test of faith; it provided the basis for a very necessary system of mutual support for Saints who, when scattered, were easy prey for persecution but who, when gathered, could more readily defend themselves; it gave substance to the feeling that the members of the new Church were akin to the Children of Israel, denied security and peace in their homeland and, therefore, searching for a location appropriate for the building of Zion, where they could anticipate the second coming of Christ. The revelation which Joseph Smith claimed he received was indeed specific upon this last point:

And ye are called to bring to pass the gathering of mine elect; for mine elect hear my voice and harden not their hearts.

Wherefore the decree hath gone forth from the Father that they shall be gathered in unto one place upon the face of the land, to prepare their hearts and be prepared in all things against the day when tribulation and desolation are sent forth upon the wicked. ².

The arguments in support of the gathering and first applied in New York State and New England, from whence the Saints journeyed

2. Doctrine and Covenants : Vol. 1, June 1840.

to Kirtland, retained their relevance a decade later when the Book of Mormon was being introduced to the many who were prepared to give the early missionaries to Britain a hearing. By that time, the vocabulary of the gathering was well established, the satisfaction and contentment to be experienced by those who resided in Zion being countered by the suffering and destruction which would inevitably befall Babylon. It became not only a duty but a necessity for British Saints to emigrate from Babylon and thus escape the impending disasters that threatened their homeland. From its earliest editions, the Millennial Star reinforced this teaching by citing the many misfortunes inflicted upon various "gentile" nations: the issue of June 1840 - only the second edition to be published - referred to the destruction of towns by earthquakes, to tremors being experienced in Scotland, to civil war in Spain, to plague in the East, to Mexican and South American governments being overwhelmed, to assassination attempts and to various hostilities elsewhere. 3. The implication was that these were preludes to the complete retribution which was to overtake Babylon; for the Saints, salvation was to be found in emigration.

The British Saints, many of whom had been assailed by unemployment and who were becoming increasingly familiar with oppression and ridicule in their home towns, received this additional incentive to participate in the gathering, an incentive with an implicit suggestion of urgency.

3. Millennial Star : Vol. 1, June 1840.

As the Millennial Star methodically and regularly listed disasters, both natural and political, in the column which it aptly headed "Signs of the Times", so it was not reticent to present the economic enticements of America, and specifically the attractions of Nauvoo, Illinios, which by 1840, when the first Mormon chartered vessel sailed from England, was an established and developing community.

The subject of the gathering is one of the greatest interest, awakening in the heart of the Saint, some of the noblest and most thrilling sensations. The reflection that we are called, like our father Abraham of old, to leave the land of our birth, the home of our childhood - where so many ties have bound us - where affection's sympathies have entwined, with many a fold, the cords of love around our hearts, in order to seek a foreign land, and find a home among strangers; to cross the mighty ocean and brave its perils, in order to find a resting place on its distant shores, awakes no ordinary interest. But even feelings of this nature are but trifling compared with other thoughts and other motives that arise in the minds of Saints. It is the commandment of Heaven, bidding us flee from Babylon, lest we become partakers of her sins, and receive of her plagues. It is the voice of God inviting us to the assembly of the Saints of the Most High, that we may receive instruction in the House of the Lord, partake of the blessings of his spirit, and be prepared for the coming of the Son of Man. 4.

Once the emigration of British Saints had commenced, the editors of the Millennial Star devoted considerable space to letters from Saints who had wished their experiences to be made known to those who continued to reside in Britain. These letters were frequently supplemented by accounts of the lives led in Nauvoo, and later Utah, penned by non-Mormon visitors whose interests had been excited by the

4. Millennial Star : Vol. 4, May 1843.

growth of these centres of Church activity. The earliest of these articles was a reprint from the Columbus Advocate in which the author, who signed himself "An Observer", expressed his disappointment at not having his preconceptions confirmed by his visit to Nauvoo. The observer had anticipated that he "should witness an impoverished, ignorant and bigoted population;" he recorded seeing "a people apparently happy, prosperous and intelligent - every man appeared to be employed in some business or occupation." 5. In a reprint from Times and Seasons, a Mormon publication, "An Englishman" gave a more practical description of the quality of life experienced on the banks of the Mississippi.

The inhabitants seem to be a wonderfully enterprising people; the walls of the temple have been raised considerably this summer; it is calculated when finished it will be the glory of Illinois. They are endeavouring to establish manufacturies in the city. They have enclosed large farms on the prairie ground, on which they have raised corn, wheat, hemp etc. and all this they have accomplished within the short space of four years. I do not believe that there is another people in existence who could have made such improvement in the same length of time, under the same circumstances. And here allow me to remark, that there are some here who have lately emigrated to this place, who have built themselves large and convenient houses in the town, others on their farms on the prairie, who if they had remained at home might have continued to live in rented houses all their days, and never once have entertained the idea of building one for themselves at their own expense. 6.

5. Millennial Star : Vol. 3, June 1842.

6. Millennial Star : Vol. 4, February 1844.

The Millennial Star provided prospective emigrants with detailed instructions concerning their reserving passages on chartered vessels, on the payment of deposits, and provided advice on what items of equipment and furniture they should endeavour to take with them. The emigrant of 1842 was thus advised to take all kinds of clothing and beds and bedding, pots and pans, cooking utensils, bedsteads, tables, chairs, a sofa, drawers and as many tools as possible appropriate to the trade the emigrant hoped to follow in Nauvoo, as no charge was made for the freight from Liverpool to New Orleans and only a nominal charge would be imposed for transporting these items up the Mississippi to the new home. 7.

Although a small number of Saints had effected their individual emigration prior to 1840, the sailing of the North America on 7th August of that year, with its complement of some two hundred Saints under the presidency of Theodore Turley, inaugurated an emigration system that in terms of efficiency, safety and capacity was arguably without rival during the nineteenth century. By 1877, when John Taylor succeeded Brigham Young as President of the Church, approximately forty-five thousand British converts had crossed the Atlantic under its auspices, whilst considerable numbers of emigrants who were not Church members chose to trust their persons and belongings to the disciplined practices of the Latter-Day Saints, who proclaimed a

7. Millennial Star: Vol.3, August 1842.

willingness to transport "all industrious, honest and well-disposed persons" ⁸. who applied to travel on vessels chartered by the Church.

During the infancy of Mormon emigration two routes from Britain to Nauvoo were tried; the first was via the eastern seaboard and then overland, across the Appalachians; the second route used Quebec as the port of disembarkation, from whence the emigrants journeyed west by means of rivers, lakes and canals. Both routes, however, were short-lived, the former being used by three vessels, including the two which sailed in 1840, while the latter was plied by one or at most two sailing ships. By the second year of the emigration programme the more convenient and simpler route from Liverpool to New Orleans and then to Illinois via the Mississippi was tried and became firmly established. By using this route, immigrants could avoid the prospect of the northern waterways being blocked by ice for long periods of the year, although those who arrived in New Orleans during the summer months had to be wary of the incidence of disease, and especially of cholera, which took the lives of many immigrants who crossed the delta during this season.

The cost of a passage from Liverpool to New Orleans during the first spate of emigration was generally less than four pounds; once in New Orleans a further fifteen shillings would secure passage to Nauvoo, freight usually being conveyed free of charge. A convert

8. Millennial Star : Vol.2, February 1842.

could, therefore, hope to accomplish the entire journey for approximately five pounds. This sum, however, was beyond the immediate means of many Saints and could only be achieved after years of saving and subscribing to emigration funds organized at branch level. A time gap thus usually occurred between conversion and emigration, so that the emigrating Saint had often been a member of the Church for a considerable period before he was able to venture across the Atlantic. This premise is substantiated by the findings of a survey ^{9.} of the passenger list of what is generally regarded as the most famous of the Mormon emigrant vessels, the Amazon, which sailed in 1863, the vessel visited by Charles Dickens when researching for the Uncommercial Traveller. Of the adult passengers on this vessel which conveyed eight hundred and ninety Mormon emigrants, eighty five percent had been Church members for five years or more prior to emigrating and approximately ten percent had held membership in excess of fifteen years. Additionally a tendency for married adult emigrants to have been Church members for some three or four years on average longer than their single fellow emigrants was revealed, families obviously finding greater difficulty in raising the money for the voyage than single Mormons experienced. This financial difficulty explains the practice of families separating for emigration, in some cases the husband going ahead, subsequently to send for other family members once he had earned or raised the money to cover the fares, in other cases the children of one family going in advance under the guardianship of another family group, a practice to which the Church did not give its approval.

9. Richard L. Jenson and Gordon Irving : British Mormon Emigrants on the Ship Amazon, 1863.

In regard to emigration I would recommend patience as well as perseverance; and that the Saints do not emigrate in haste, leaving affairs unsettled, or their property to be wasted; and above all pay every man his honest due as far as possible. And, in regard to husbands and wives, we feel bound to forbid the separation of one from the other in emigrating, either on account of poverty or any other cause. Let them go together or stay together, live together or die together, and let nothing separate them from each other during so long and tedious a journey. ¹⁰.

For many emigrants the journey from their home town to Liverpool was the first of many tests of faith. Frederick Weight, a Gloucestershire convert, was one such. He married just a week prior to commencing his emigration and with his bride he joined a party of six other adults and several children who chose the sea journey from Bristol to Liverpool in preference to travelling overland. In his journal he records taking his fare-well of his father, the last time he saw him, and then taking the steam packet from Bristol. On this vessel there was no specific accommodation for the Mormons unless they chose to share the hold with livestock. Declining this, he sat on deck with his wife until night-fall, at which time he could not determine his best course of action.

The sea was getting worse and worse - the water dashing over the sides of the steamer and rolling from side to side so that we could not stand on deck. My wife, clinging to me every moment, we now began to really feel what seasickness was. As our vessel heaved, we heaved, so I asked one of the sailors if he would let me have his berth for my poor wife that night, to which he consented for a half-crown. I paid him and put her to bed, but Oh! What a place! It was in the forecastle of the steamer and the bed reeked with filth, oil, grease, and such a horrible stench! This

10.. Millennial Star : Vol. 3, October 1842.

was the place where I had put my new bride; after having paid such an outrageous price. I was with her all night holding the slop basin for her, as she was vomiting constantly and so weak she could not help herself. The vessel was pitching and the water rolling over us all night long. ¹¹.

The sickness experienced on journeying round the Welsh coast was the prelude to that which they had to accommodate in crossing the Atlantic, for Weight tells of the extreme sickness of his wife on board the North America as they crossed the ocean. The entire journey to the Salt Lake Valley for Weight and his wife took a little over three years as he had to stop at various points en route to earn sufficient to continue his journey. Even when the journey was completed Weight's trials were not over as he did not find the Valley to be the haven of plenty that many had depicted, being forced to camp in what remained of his wagon, whilst his wife became consumptive and died there; the chronicle of Mormon emigration records many similar stories.

An emigrant party would often contain many who were aged or infirm, many who found the journey intensely rigorous and many who did not survive it. A decade after Weight sailed, John Redington, President of the Worcester Conference, recorded meeting Saints from Cheltenham at Worcester Station in transit for Liverpool and then New York. He wrote of the party in some detail.

Bro. Birch's wife who has this day left here home to travell a journey of about 8000 miles by land and sea,

11. Frederick Weight, A Life History of Frederick Weight .

is a cripple and has been so for years, having been afflicted with the Reumatics, until they have nearly taken the use of all her limbs, so can only get about with the help of a crutch and then she can go a very few steps at a time, with very great difficulty. Sis. Nash is about 60 years old, and has left her husband only this morning (he is opposed to Mormonism) without any one of her relatives to accompany her (she has a family of children grown up,) whom she leaves all behind to find for her, a home with the Saints of God, in the Valley. Sis. Richardson is also about 60 years old, a widow, she has also a family of children grown up, whom she leaves behind, except her son Charles who accompanies her. Surely there is a power about their religion which but few have ever realized (except those who receive the Gospel) to induce people of this kind to leave their home and relatives, for a strange land and strange people (except being members of the same Church) to undergo all the trials and privations that must attend such an undertaking. ¹².

Among the earliest of British Saints to arrive in Nauvoo was Mary Field Garner whose parents, members of the United Brethren Church at Stanley Hill, Herefordshire, had been baptized by Wilford Woodruff in 1840, in which year they sailed to America, the first year of the Church's emigration programme. Later in life, Mary recorded her memories of Nauvoo, "a beautiful city which had been built up from swamplands." She told of listening to the Prophet Joseph, and later of viewing the bodies of Joseph and Hyrum after their murders. "At the public burial only bags of sand were deposited in the grave, the bodies being buried in the Nauvoo Mansion House at night, afterwards being taken up and buried in the rear of the house where Joseph lived." ¹³.

12. John Redington, Journal 1859 - 1905.

13. Mary Field Garner, "Autobiography" in Our Pioneer Heritage ed. Kate B. Carter, Vol. 7, 1964, pp. 406 -414.

While at Nauvoo her father and two of her sisters died. Her mother was left with six children to care for and bring up; the poverty was acute.

We were very poor and had very little to eat, cornmeal being our main food. When the other food became exhausted we were put on rations of one pint of cornmeal a day for the seven of us. We could cook it as we pleased. Oh, how hungry we were for something else to eat. The children cried for a piece of whitebread and Mother oft-times would cry with us as she was unable to give us the bread or get enough food to satisfy the hungry cries of her children. Mother worked hard to provide for us and keep our family together. The Saints were very kind and tried to help us the best they could. You must remember most of the Saints were poor after being forced to leave their old homes and being driven from one state to another by the anti-Mormons.

A Potteries Saint, John Bourne, resided for four years in Nauvoo, witnessing the growth of that settlement and finally the Mormon withdrawal from the city. Prior to emigrating he had been labouring as a missionary in Hereford where the Saints entrusted to him their emigration savings and requested him to accompany them to Liverpool as they were unacquainted with a venture of this type. He did as they asked and sailed with them on the Hanover which left Liverpool on 15th March 1842, completing the journey to New Orleans in six and a half weeks. From that city he travelled up river to Nauvoo where he gained employment in a brickyard, making on average seventy-five cents per day. Such was the economy of Nauvoo that he was paid in bricks, the exchange rate being a dollar per thousand made but in selling them he got half that rate. In 1844 he transferred to work in a pottery but in the aftermath of Joseph Smith's death and the assaults upon Nauvoo by the non-Mormon mobs, he commenced working for a coach-builder

constructing wagons, hoping to receive one for himself and his family so that he could remove them from Nauvoo. Like many other settlers, this did not materialize; neither did he receive any pay for his labours. Zion did not provide material comfort for John Bourne and his family. 14.

Job F. Smith also worked in a brick yard, following his emigration from Herefordshire to Nauvoo, being paid for his work "mostly in provisions and a little store pay." The superintendent of the Nauvoo Brick Yard at that time - 1844 - was Frank Pullen whom Smith had known in England, this re-establishing of former acquaintances being a common pattern during the early days of the emigration programme. Smith, who had been among the United Brethren, converted by Woodruff in 1840, and who had sailed from Liverpool in March 1843 on board the sailing ship Yorkshire, recorded in his Autobiography 15. being met upon landing at Nauvoo by the Prophet Joseph Smith and Apostle Brigham Young. In Nauvoo he, his sister, his aunt and uncle, found a temporary home with a former preacher of the United Brethren order, Charles Price. He recalled Sunday meetings at the "stand", an area of trees in front of the Temple which was still in the process of being built, and there being addressed by Joseph Smith and other leaders of the Church, initially on such practical matters as how to succeed in becoming permanently settled, practical affairs frequently having priority within the Saints' society.

14. John Bourne, Reminiscences.

15. Job F. Smith, Autobiography .

Although in the early years of emigration, the Church had spoken against husbands and wives separating to emigrate when only one of the union was a Mormon, this estrangement did occur. The extent of such separation is difficult to determine; there are, however, innumerable accounts in individual journals and records of this action being taken entirely on grounds of religious practice. Sarah Roberts of Westbury, Shropshire, was baptized into the Church in 1849, three years after her marriage to William Jones. She recorded that her husband "was a good, kind husband and an honourable man" ¹⁶ with whom she lived "very happily" for twenty three years. She attempted to convert him to Mormonism "but he did not want any religion and would not embrace it." Accordingly, Sarah told her husband that she would have to leave him, which she did in July 1869, crossing the "mighty deep to join the Saints in Utah." She partly justified her action by quoting the Bible : "he that will not leave father and mother and all for my sake, is not worthy of me." Arriving in Ogden by the then established railway, Sarah Roberts settled in Utah and a year later married Peter Roberts, a Mormon widower with a family of four children.

Emily Hodgetts, however, a Worcester Saint, was baptized into the Mormon Church at the age of eight, following her mother's teachings in this matter. In fact, with the exception of her father, the entire family accepted the new faith; he, however, was a kindly and generous man,

16. Sara Price Roberts, "Autobiography" in Woman's Exponent. Vol. 30, No. 6. p.47.

and was hospitable towards visiting Elders. Even so, Emily's mother felt the need to respond to the doctrine of the gathering and, having sufficient means to do so, she secured passages for herself, her two daughters and three other young converts, for whom she also paid, on the Enoch Train which sailed from Liverpool on 18th March 1856. When her father, who had been away from home at the time of their leaving, received news of the migration, he followed his family to Liverpool and pursued them on a faster vessel into the Irish Channel. On overtaking the Enoch Train, he paid the captain of that ship one hundred sovereigns to cast anchor for one hour, during which time he boarded the vessel and sought his family. Through his persuasion - he offered to sell all and emigrate to Utah - he got his wife to return with him; his daughters, Emily, then fifteen, and Maria, who was two years older, however, journeyed to Boston where they were met by their brother, William, with whom they continued the journey to Salt Lake City, arriving in adverse conditions in the December of that year. Sadly the parents' emigration ended in tragedy, Mrs. Lowder dying within a few months of arriving in Utah with her husband. 17.

Mary Ann Weston Maugham told a not entirely dissimilar story of being pursued as far as the emigrant ship. Her background was likewise wealthy, her father owning farm-land near the Corse Hills, Gloucestershire. Whilst apprenticed to a dressmaker and living with an aunt and uncle,

17. Emily Lowder, "Autobiography" in Our Pioneer Heritage :
ed. Kate B. Carter, Vol. 7, 1964, pp. 424 -428.

she was converted to Mormonism and received into the Church by Wilford Woodruff, being baptized in the village pond at mid-night to avoid persecution. She married a fellow Mormon, a cooper and carpenter, John Davis, in 1840 and together they opened their house for religious services, there being no other preaching house in the vicinity. Antagonistic non-Mormons, incited by this, persecuted the young couple and physically assaulted the husband who received injuries which at least contributed to his death within four months of the marriage. Widowed, she determined to join a company of emigrants who hired a team of horses to take them to Gloucester. She recalled that the company wept all the way to that city, being saddened by the severing of their respective connections. From Gloucester they took the stage to Bristol, forming part of the only known company to sail from that port, their vessel being the Harmony.

While waitting, some lawyers from Gloucester came to the Ship on Bissiness with some of the passengers and enquired for Mrs Davis a Black eyed young Widow dressed in Black. they serched the Ship through every day for about a week. I had been warned of this and counceled to lay aside my Black. this I did and dressed like a gay young girl. I mingled with the girls and watched them searching for me but they did not find the Young Widow with Black Eyes. I afterwards learned that Father went to these lawyers and asked if he could compell me to return home. on learning the Circumstances they said I was of age had been Married and did not go home after my husbands Death, and that he could not hinder me from going where I pleased. he then told them that if they would find me and persward me to return with them he would pay them well for their trouble but as they could not find me, they did not get any of the Money Father might have given me. thus I left home without receiving a sixpence from anyone. the reason was they did not know what Money I had and thinking I could not go without more said they would give me Money to stay at home but none to go away with but trusting in the word of God I bade them all Adue. 18.

Mary Ann Maugham was to witness many of the most significant events in early Mormon history: from Quebec she journeyed to Kirtland where she was able to worship in the Temple during her seven week stay; she then travelled to Nauvoo where she was married to Peter Maugham by Apostle John Taylor; there she experienced the various crises that befell that city; in 1850 she undertook the overland journey to Salt Lake City and eventually settled with her family in Cache County. In her diary she recorded hearing Martin Harris bearing witness to the truth of the Book of Mormon and also described the funeral of the Prophet Brigham Young.

The commencement of Mormon emigration co-incided with a general interest in emigration that gave birth to a vast number of schemes, some ingenious others absurd, as all types of bodies and organizations advanced their own plans in the respective emigration pamphlets and journals. One such scheme belonged to the Mormons and was particularly associated with the American President of the British Mission, Reuben Hedlock, who, shortly after the death of Joseph Smith and while the Church was experiencing the crisis that followed the death of its Prophet, announced through the pages of the Millennial Star, the founding of a Joint Stock Company which was to be called The Mutual Benefit Association. The concept was relatively simple: capital not less than thirty thousand pounds would be raised by the sale of ten shilling shares; this capital would be employed in chartering or purchasing vessels which would transport both passengers and machinery to America where the latter would be used to establish branches of manufacture; on the return trip, the vessels would transport food to

Britain and indulge in other trading practices. The established branch organization would be utilized to ensure the collection of subscriptions, each branch appointing an agent to be responsible for this work. The profits that ensued from the enterprise would be employed to convey poor Saints without the means to emigrate, it being estimated that five to ten families could thus be assisted per voyage. The spiritual appeal of the gathering and the attraction of a commercial venture were linked in Hedlock's exposition.

As far as we ourselves are concerned, we have no idea of the Saints gathering in a state of poverty and destitution. Zion must be established in richness and beauty, and the place of the feet of the Lord must be made glorious, and all nations must eventually contribute of their richness and treasures to effect the same.

Surely, then, it is time for the Saints to lay aside the remnants of a false sanctity that would scorn the treasures of the earth, and only occupy itself with the contemplation of a morbid spirituality, that will never bring lasting glory to God or man. 19.

The Joint Stock Company was welcomed with considerable enthusiasm, thousands of shares were applied for and many prominent Saints applauded the venture. Yet in October 1846 with the arrival of Apostles Orson Hyde and John Taylor, the scheme was denounced and the project wound up with some alacrity. In an explanation in the Millennial Star, Hyde claimed that the purposes of the scheme had "materially changed" since its inception and that poor business practice had undermined its soundness. Its charter had been negotiated at a cost that was three times that expended by similar companies; "a very unwise policy to trade by sea had sunk the greater part of the capital;" large sums of money had

19. Millennial Star : Vol. 7, 1st March 1846.

been loaned to individuals who had subsequently "eloped and left them minus;" salaries had been awarded to the officers of the Company before any profit had accumulated. ²⁰. Reuben Hedlock and his close associate, Thomas Ward, were excommunicated from the Church in what amounted to a major upheaval. It may well be, however, that more than inefficient business practice was the cause of the abrupt closure of the Company and that behind all was a crisis of authority. ²¹. The Joint Stock Company concluded in failure, in excommunication for its two leading advocates and in a certain embarrassment for the Church; during its brief existence, however, it had demonstrated the desire of many Saints to establish a permanent emigration scheme whereby the profits could be enjoyed by the Church and impoverished Saints aided in their desire to emigrate. If the practice had been deficient, the principle had been commended.

To sail on an emigrant ship in the mid-nineteenth century was a brutal experience. The emigrant was allocated eighteen inches of bunk space and frequently had to share a bunk with three other people to whom he was a stranger. The space between bunks was not cleaned until the day prior to the boat docking; beds were not brought on deck to be given an airing; drunkenness was regular, some captains actually selling spirits to emigrants and encouraging over-indulgence; little moral restraint was attempted. Food was inadequate and usually poorly cooked; there was insufficient drinking water to wash down the

20. Millennial Star : Vol. 8, 1st November 1846.

21. Philip Taylor : Expectations Westward, p. 46.

salt provisions and, so, much food had to be thrown overboard. Washing and toilet facilities were totally inadequate; emigrants were frequently abused both verbally and physically; the ship's cooks and, perhaps more importantly, the ship's surgeon were open to bribery and often refused to perform their duties without additional payment being made. The annals of the emigration trade recount a narrative of degradation and abuse that has a certain kinship to its predecessor, the slave trade. Additionally it was obvious that many of the passengers had no understanding of what trans-Atlantic emigration entailed as they eagerly looked for the new land with Ireland hardly over the horizon. 22. The achievement of the Mormon Church in effecting a disciplined and efficient emigration system appears the greater when assessed against the norm for non-Mormon emigration, as many independent witnesses were to testify.

From a visit to the Steamship Curling we are able to lay some interesting facts before the readers of the Tribune respecting the order and management of the voyage. A large majority of the passengers are of the poorer classes of British peasantry, Ireland contributing but a small proportion, who are sent to Utah at the expense of the Emigrating Fund. They are mainly in families, only a few single men and women were on board. The married people were of all ages from tender 18 to hale 80, and appear to enjoy good health and spirits. The vessel was the cleanest emigrant ship we have ever seen; notwithstanding the large number of her passengers, order, cleanliness, and comfort prevailed on all hands, and between decks were as sweet and well ventilated as the cabin, and the topdeck was as white as scrubbing brush and holystone could make it. It would be well if the packet-ships that ply between this port and Liverpool were to

22. Terry Coleman, Passage to America : Middlesex. 1974, p.122.

imitate the system of management on board this ship. The passengers were under the Presidency of Elder Israel Barlow and two Counsellors, Elders Perry and Robinson. The Company was divided into seven wards, each superintended by a President and two Counsellors, who together attended to the affairs of the ward, such as cooking, drawing water, morning and evening worship, looking after the sick, setting the watch, and in short, directing the affairs, temporal and spiritual, of the people committed to their care. ²³.

A routine was quickly established for Mormon vessels: the emigrants rose at 4.00a.m. and commenced cleaning the wards; one hour later they assembled for morning worship; from 5.30a.m. each ward in turn made use of the galley for cooking, the order in which the wards enjoyed this facility rotating; likewise from 11.00a.m. and 5.00p.m. the wards prepared dinner and tea respectively; at 8.00p.m. the wards met for evening service after which all lights were put out and the night watch set. The important unit, therefore, for order and discipline was the ward and within these units the Mormons conducted their affairs.

The most celebrated record of a Mormon emigrant vessel, penned by Charles Dickens, related to the Amazon, lying in London docks as it was prepared for its voyage. Dickens' uncommercial traveller narrated the experience, he having gone to view the vessel in cynical mind, anticipating a deluded and disorganized people.

I go aboard my Emigrant Ship, I go on to the poop-deck, for air, and surveying the emigrants on the deck below (indeed they are crowded all about me, up there too), find more pens and ink-stands in action,

23. Millennial Star : Vol. 17, June 1855. Reprint of an article in the New York Tribune.

and more papers, and interminable complications respecting accounts with individuals for tin cans and what not. But nobody is in an ill-temper, nobody is the worse for drink, nobody swears an oath or uses a coarse word, and down upon the deck in every corner when it is possible to find a few square feet to kneel, crouch, or lie in, people in every unsuitable attitude for writing, are writing letters.

Now I have seen emigrant ships before this day in June. And these people are so strikingly different from all other people in like circumstances whom I have ever seen, that I wonder aloud "What would a stranger suppose these emigrants to be !"

The vigilant bright face of the weather-browned captain of the Amazon is at my shoulder, and he says, "What indeed! The most of these came aboard yesterday evening. They came from various parts of England in small parties that have never seen one another before. Yet they had not been a couple of hours on board, when they established their own police, made their own regulations, and set their own watches at all the hatchways. Before nine o' clock the ship was orderly and as quiet as a man-o-war." ²⁴.

The collective identity and necessity for co-operation became the hall-marks of Mormon emigration. In his Emigrant's Journal, Samuel Sidney recognised this discipline for, when asked by a non-Mormon to advise him whether he should emigrate in a party of fifty, Sidney gave the reply "Can you make fifty men, without other law than their own will, move like the Mormons or a military machine?" ²⁵. The Church likewise emphasized the need for corporate action during emigration for it indicated clearly to its membership that when four hundred people from various parts of the country or even from different

24. Charles Dickens, Uncommercial Traveller : p.185.

25. Quoted by Terry Coleman, Op. cit. : p. 26.

countries - for European emigration was via Liverpool -should be lodged in the limited confines of a ship, and they differing in manners, habits and dispositions, Mormons should not expect to be "quite so comfortable, or have things so much their own way as they may have been accustomed to in their own houses on the land. " 26. Their comfort or discomfort would depend upon themselves. "By watching and praying, and seeking the influence of the Holy Spirit, and exercising patience and forbearance, and cultivating a cheerful and obliging demeanour towards one another, the voyage to New Orleans, may be converted into a pleasure-trip, and all privations and discomforts be forgotten in the peace and harmony which may prevail." Even given all these circumstances, no one could view the Atlantic crossing as a "pleasure trip" and the Midlands Saints, like their colleagues elsewhere in the country, experienced storms, becalmings and an immeasurable amount of sea-sickness before they sighted America. Other companions on the voyage were, of course, birth and death. Among the births was a daughter born on 7th August 1863 to Brother and Sister Harris of Stratford, the baby girl receiving a name that reflected her place of birth, Amazon Seaborn Harris. 27. Deaths were more common and usually less celebrated: the Elvira Owen sailed from Liverpool to New Orleans in 1853 having among its passengers a Brother Hinginson from the Shropshire Conference who sadly contracted small-pox from which he and a young convert from Willenhall died; 28. in 1864 there was a report

26. Millennial Star : Vol. 15, 15th January 1853.

27. Millennial Star : Vol. 25. 20th June 1863.

28. Millennial Star : Vol. 15, 30th April 1853.

of measles being brought aboard the Hudson bound from London to New York, this disease apparently being carried by one of the non-Mormon passengers and resulting in the death of a fourteen month old infant from Cheltenham, Emily Frances Kellow; 29. the most common causes of death, however, were decidedly non-dramatic, simply infirmity of the aged and the inevitable infant mortality.

While the saga of the Joint Stock Company was unfolding within the British Mission, in Illinois the larger crisis that culminated in the Saints' abandonment of Nauvoo was being enacted. Through the Millennial Star, the experiences in Nauvoo were presented to the British Saints in a positive manner: Nauvoo had "served its purpose for the present time;" it had "been a central point for the Saints, to teach them the principle of the gathering; there they have acquired many a lesson of industry and wisdom in connection with the Kingdom of God; they have learned to estimate the capabilities of the Saints when united and under the blessing of the Lord; and though they have practised the virtues of forbearance and long suffering, they have discovered that they have a power and energy of command, that will be called at no distant day, into exercise at the will of God." 30. Thus the experiences of Nauvoo had served as a preface for the settlement of Utah.

Within months of the pioneers entering the Salt Lake Valley,

29. Millennial Star : Vo. 26, 20th August 1864.

30. Millennial Star : Vol. 7, 1st March 1846.

British Saints were being encouraged to contemplate emigration from their homeland to settle in this new land of Zion.

Emigration! The channel of Saints' emigration to the land of Zion, is now opened. The long wished for time of gathering has come. Good tidings from Mount Zion! The resting place of Israel for the last days has been discovered. Beautiful for situation, and the ultimate joy of the whole earth is the State of Zion established in the mountains. In the elevated valley of the Salt and Entau Lakes, with the beautiful river Jordan running through it, from south to north is the newly established State of Zion. There vegetation flourishes with magic rapidity. And the food of man or staff of life leaps into maturity from the bowels of mother earth, with astonishing celerity. Within one month from planting, potatoes grew from 'six to eight inches', and corn from two to four feet. There the pregnant clouds introduce their fertilizing contents, at a modest distance from the fat valley, and send their humid influences from the mountain tops. There the saline atmosphere of Salt Lake mingles in wedlock with the fresh humidity of the same vegetable element that courses over the mountain top, as if the nuptial bond of rare elements was intended to exhibit a novel specimen of a perfect vegetable progeny in the shortest possible time; or, in other words, as if nature's lenses had obtained a focal point of nutritive power just in the valley of the Great Salt Lake. ³¹.

The route to the Salt Lake Valley in its early stages followed the path taken by Saints emigrating to Nauvoo: from Liverpool to New Orleans, up the Mississippi to St. Louis and then, changing direction, to travel north west on the Missouri to Council Bluffs. established as the outfitting camp where wagons could be procured for the long trek west. In 1848, as emigration to Utah commenced, the cost from Liverpool to Council Bluffs was estimated by the Liverpool office to be ten pounds; the expense from that point to

31. Millennial Star : Vol. 10, 1st February 1848.

the valley would depend on various circumstances - the size of the party or the availability of work en route. The additional distance and the particular geography of the route likewise posed problems since the Rocky Mountains had to be crossed prior to the winter snows and the wagon trains had to find adequate grazing for their livestock as they journeyed. Thus, in many cases, the journey from Liverpool to the Salt Lake Valley was completed in a series of phases, many emigrants heeding the advice of the Church and spending a winter in New Orleans before proceeding further, travelling the two major rivers at a period of high water and crossing the Rocky Mountains in spring.

In 1849, at the October Conference of the Church in Salt Lake City, was launched the most influential scheme to assist emigration that the Church ever embarked upon - the Perpetual Emigrating Fund. The Saints, in fact, prior to leaving Nauvoo had entered into a solemn covenant that they would not cease their labours until every individual who so desired but was unable to gather to the Valley had been assisted in that desire. Originally the scheme was intended to assist poor Saints in Illinois or Missouri but its implications for European Saints were quickly realized by Brigham Young and his Apostles. Initially money would be raised by voluntary contribution in Salt Lake City to assist in the purchase of wagons and livestock to enable the Saints to cross the plains and mountains to the Salt Lake Valley; as the scheme was extended to Europe, it aimed to assist impoverished Saints to purchase their passage to New Orleans and up the great rivers of America. "When Saints thus helped arrive here, they will give their obligations to the

Church to refund the amount of what they have received, as soon as circumstances will permit; and labour will be furnished to such as wish on the public works, and good pay; and as fast as they can procure the necessities of life, and a surplus, that surplus will be applied to liquidating the debt and thereby increasing the Perpetual Fund." 32. The assistance proffered to a Saint was thus a loan, to be repaid in money or in kind once the Saint was established in Utah.

The scheme was an eminent success, within the first four years of its existence assisting over seventeen hundred Saints to emigrate and during the same period receiving seven thousand pounds in contributions from British Saints. One important feature of the fund and the organization necessary for its administration was that Saints in Utah could deposit funds or wealth in kind with the officers in the Valley and then send for relatives or friends from Britain whose passages had thus been assured. Of the many who emigrated under the auspices of the fund some had their entire costs advanced while others had a proportion. Companies were established whereby emigrants had to find a set amount of the cost and the fund advanced the remainder; such companies took their titles from the amount the emigrant contributed, the most common being the ten and twelve pound companies.

As the emigration of British Saints to Utah developed - in the peak years 1853 - 56 some eleven thousand British Saints emigrated - so the Perpetual Emigrating Fund played an increasingly important role.

32. Millennial Star : Vol. 12, -15th April 1850.

In 1854, for example, approximately half of the total number who emigrated were assisted by the fund. ³³. The spirit that had initiated the Joint Stock Company was again active but the administration that sustained the Perpetual Emigrating Fund was of a remarkable efficiency.

To commemorate this unique migration the Church commissioned a British artist, Frederick Hawkins Piercy, a young man of twenty three whose work had been exhibited at the Royal Academy, to journey from Liverpool to the Great Salt Lake Valley, taking the route of the Mormon emigrants and sketching various landmarks that had gained a place and reputation in Mormon history. These sketches were to be translated into engravings and provide a tangible recollection of the journey upon which so many had embarked. Piercy sailed on the Jersey, leaving Liverpool on 5th February 1853 in a company of three hundred and thirteen Mormons, and arrived in New Orleans on 21st March of that year. From this city he took the original Mormon route up the Mississippi, eventually arriving at Nauvoo where he viewed the Temple, now sadly in ruins, it having been fired by an arsonist in November 1848. In his prose description of his journey which augmented the sketches, he reported this most poignant moment, his narrative throughout maintaining a quiet detachment.

It is the finest possible site for a city, and its present neglected state shows how little a really good thing is sometimes appreciated. The first objects I saw in approaching the city were the remains of what was

33. Millennial Star : Vol. 16, 13th May 1854.

once the Temple, situated on the highest eminence of the city, and which, in the days of prosperity, must have been to it what the cap or top stone is to a building. On the banks of the river lie broken blocks of stone and shattered bricks, and the visitors' first steps are over evidences of ruin and desolation. Foundations of what must once have been substantial buildings are broken up and exposed to the light, and houses, once noted for neatness, cleanliness and order, and surrounded by flower gardens, evincing taste, care, and a love of the beautiful, after being pillaged of all that was valuable and portable, have been abandoned by their ruthless destroyers, and are now monuments of their selfish, jealous and contemptible hate.³⁴

But the ruined Temple at Nauvoo was already of the past, as was Carthage Jail, which he also sketched; the present and future lay to the west across the plains and mountains, and this path Piercy took, recording his impressions both visually and verbally whilst en route; his record remains as both a personal travelogue and a testimony to the endurance of the emigrants.

Osmond Shaw, a Staffordshire Saint, and his wife Eliza experienced both the trauma of parting from parents who did all in their power to dissuade them from emigration and also the heartbreak of witnessing the deaths of their children on the journey. After schooling, Shaw had gained employment as warehouseman and subsequently became engaged to Eliza Wilding of Baddeley Green. The engaged couple were converted to the Mormon faith, accepting at the same time the doctrine of the gathering, this being much to the displeasure of Shaw's father, Simeon,

34. Frederick Piercy, Route from Liverpool to Great Salt Lake Valley: ed. Fawn Brodie, Massachusetts, 1962 reprint, pp. 93-94.

who refused to consider anything pertaining to Mormonism. After five years of married life, when Eliza was expecting their second child - their first, a son, being then three years old - they were able to fulfil their undertaking and emigrated in 1849. A baby daughter was born to them in May of that year, just a month after they had reached St. Louis, but there that major hazard of the Mississippi struck the family; cholera claimed both the new born baby and their son. In a letter of August 1849 to his son, Simeon refers to these deaths..

We must feelingly sympathize with you in your losses. Heaven does all things well! Trust in God and do good and the promise is immutable. "In all your ways acknowledge him and he shall direct your steps." But yet this is a very heavy beareavement; and still we shall all rejoice if it cause you to turn your faces homeward, and incite you to come home with greater haste than you made to quit our neighbourhood. Believe me, this is the earnest wish of every one of the family. 35.

Having accepted the break with their families in England, endured the Atlantic crossing, during which Eliza's pregnancy can hardly have helped, lost both children while still in transit and in a strange land, Osmond Shaw and his wife had, in addition, to contend with the emotional appeal to return, it even being suggested that the bereavement was God's intervention, indicating the rightness of retracing their steps. Subsequent letters from Simeon were of a similar tone:

35. Letter from Simeon Shaw to Osmond Shaw, 31st August 1849, kindly provided by E.D. White: see Emigration and the Staffordshire Potteries, M.A. Dissertation, Keele, 1976.

the young man who had replaced Osmond at his former place of work had given up the job which was then vacant and could be filled by a returning Osmond; the lack of news from America excited the expectation that the migrants were in fact already on their return journey; the advent of the steamship and the resultant quicker time for the Atlantic journey raised hopes that "some morning we shall have the announcement of your being on the way to Liverpool and Tunstall." In a later letter, Simeon informed his son that his previous employer would pay half the cost of his return passage and pay him a wage of up to thirty shillings a week should he be prepared to leave America. That letter concludes by mentioning Eliza's mother "who will never forgive you for leaving home for a wild goose chase." Osmond and Eliza did not succumb to these appeals; they journeyed on to the Salt Lake Valley where they established their home and had five further children. Osmond was eventually set aside for a mission to England which he undertook in 1868-69 but by this date the British Mission had declined rapidly in numbers and the missionary's pessimism is evident in his Journal. He did, however, convert both of Eliza's parents to Mormonism and they, together with Eliza's grandfather, John Wilding, who was also a member of the Church, journeyed to Utah where they set up home. Simeon Shaw, could not be persuaded and remained in Tunstall; as a chemist, however, he showed interest in the mineral wealth of California and wondered whether Osmond might send him some samples that could be "employed in the preparations of bodies, glazes and colours for our staple manufactures especially

porcelain." 36.

The bereavement experienced by Osmond and Eliza was by no means uncommon; many emigrants suffered losses and the cholera prone Mississippi claimed a large number. The journey, however, was fraught with more than this one hazard and some few Saints lost their lives in other, less expected, circumstances. The Ellen Maria docked in New Orleans on 9th April 1851, after a voyage of sixty three days; most of the company then journeyed up the Mississippi to St. Louis on the Alex Scot. Among this number was Sister Shelley, the wife of James Shelley of the Worcester Conference. Sadly, "in attempting to draw a bucket of water from the stream, while the boat was running at ten miles an hour, (she) was suddenly plucked into the water by the force of the Mississippi's mighty current. She floated for a moment and then sank to rise no more." 37.

Remarkably no Mormon chartered vessel was lost during an Atlantic crossing; it is, therefore, somewhat ironic to record that the same record did not apply to the vessels that plied the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers, conveying the Mormon converts even nearer to their destination. The steamship Saluda exploded on the Missouri near Lexington in 1852 killing or seriously injuring many Latter-Day Saints. Among those who died were a family from Birmingham, Elder Whitehead, his mother, wife and two children. 38.

36. Letter of Simeon Shaw to Osmond Shaw, 5th February 1852.

37. Millennial Star : Vol. 13, 1st July 1851.

38. Millennial Star : Vol. 14, 29th May 1852.

Sarah Carter crossed the ocean and plains with her family - father, mother and four brothers - in 1853. They came from Stokes Lane, Herefordshire, where, previous to accepting the Mormon faith, her father had been a member of the United Brethren, and where Sarah had been "in service" at the age of fourteen. They embarked on the Windermere, upon which small-pox broke out, claiming among others, Sarah's brothers, Rhuben and Levi. At New Orleans they were quarantined for three weeks, then, in acute poverty, they proceeded up the Mississippi, joining the Saints for their journey across the plains.

There was only one wagon for the ten of us to carry bedding, food and clothing; so as you can see there was no room for anyone to ride. Mother and all walked every step of the way. It was a rough hard journey and only with the help of our Heavenly Father did we ever reach the valley. Father was a large powerful man and when night came, he would take Mother in his arms, weak and weary from a hard day's trek and hold her close to him. This seemed to renew her strength and courage. They were a happy loving couple and I never heard an unkind word pass between them. 39.

In her Journal Sarah recalled an interesting occurrence that befell certain of the youngsters in the party of Saints who formed the wagon train. A number of the young people, thinking that they were quite capable of looking after themselves, daily set out ahead of the train; on one occasion, however, they got lost.

After traveling a long time, we came to a mountain which we climbed with difficulty, hoping when we reached the top we would see the company, but instead we saw a band of Indians.

39. Sarah Carter, "Autobiography" in Our Pioneer Heritage.

Not knowing whether they were friendly or hostile, the young man told us to wait behind some bushes while they went down to the camp for some water, as we were thirsty and our tongues were swollen and we could scarcely speak. Our boy friends returned with an old squaw and the water. Nothing ever tasted so good in our whole lives as that water did. With difficulty we explained to the squaw we were lost and could not find our way back and she, with as much effort, made us understand that, for my petticoat and my sister's stockings, she would help us find our way back. This we gladly did and she showed us the way we should take. We reached camp just at dark and just as a company was being formed to search for us. Never again did we venture away by ourselves.

The records of hardship and traumas experienced by the Saints during the journey from the Missouri to the Salt Lake Valley were many. Lucy Ashby Clark, who left Staffordshire in 1851 with her husband and family, had a rough ride over the plains and lost her daughter Sarah, aged seven, when the girl fell under a wagon wheel. 40. Her trial was that of personal loss; Thomas Day's was one of experiencing the problems of a wagon train where the customary harmony, good-will and organization did not exist. A Worcestershire Saint, he had travelled to New Orleans as President of the Joseph Bradlee and had made the journey up-river to Council Bluffs. From here he set out to cross the plains in a company led by Jos. Outhouse, to whom he later referred as "a genuine crank". Many of this party deserted the company before it reached the valley, apparently unable to reconcile themselves to the personality of its leaders. 41.

40. Lucy Ashby Clark, "Autobiography" in Our Pioneer History :
— ed. Kate B. Carter, Vol. 10, 1967, pp. 128-130.

41. Thomas Day, Autobiography .

In 1855 the decision to abandon the New Orleans route was taken, emigrants now journeying via Philadelphia and Cincinnati to St. Louis and thence across the plains. It was also in this year that the first mention was made of hand-carts replacing ox-teams so that the cost of travel being reduced, the greatest possible number of immigrants could be assisted. This at once became both the most romantic and most demanding mode of transport and, of course, came to epitomize the Mormon determination to gather in Utah. Wilford Woodruff in a letter to Orson Pratt told of greeting hand-cart companies as they approached Salt Lake City.

One of the most interesting scenes that we ever witnessed in our Territory, was the arrival of two of the hand-cart companies, on the 26th inst. (September 1855) Having heard the previous night that they were camped between the two mountains, Presidents Young and Kimball, and many citizens, with a detachment of the Lancers, and the brass bands, went out to meet them and escort them to the city. They met the companies at the foot of the Little Mountain. Elder E. Ellsionth led the first company, and Elder Daniel D. McArthur the second; and after the meetings and salutations were over, amid feelings which no one can describe, the escort was formed, a party of Lancers leading the advance, followed by the bands, the Presidency, the Marshall, and citizens; then came the companies of hand-carts, another party of Lancers bringing up the rear. Bishop Hunter, Capt. L.W. Hardy and myself fell in with the escorts as they entered the city. I must say my feelings were inexpressible to behold a company of men, women and children, many of them aged and infirm, enter the city of the Great Salt Lake, drawing 100 hand-carts with which they had travelled 1400 miles in nine weeks and to see them dance wild with joy as they travelled through the streets complaining of nothing. 42.

42. Millennial Star : Vol. 17, 13th December 1855.

In the first year of the hand-cart companies, some nineteen hundred Saints indicated their desire to accomplish the journey in this manner. The out-fitting centre was now Iowa City; here the emigrants were organized into their respective companies of one hundred hand-carts, each cart containing the provisions and the few personal belongings of four or five people. A wagon was supplied for each twenty hand-carts, this wagon to transport food and heavier possessions.

The details of such a company were chronicled by Sarah Ann Ludlam who was a member of the Willie Company of 1856. ⁴³. Her parents had been converted by Wilford Woodruff in Worcestershire, and emigrated in 1856 with their family on the sailing vessel Thornton, which berthed at New York. From there they travelled to Iowa City where they spent three weeks preparing their hand-carts for the overland journey. When they left Iowa City, everyone was walking, except children under six who rode in the hand-carts. In Sarah's family there were eight, so they were allocated two carts for their personal belongings, in this case the boys in the family pulling one cart, the girls the other. Their provisions were, of course, taken in the accompanying wagons which were pulled by oxen and mules.

At night the head of each family would receive the daily allocation of food, namely bacon and rice plus one pound of flour

43. Sarah Ann Ludham, "Autobiography" in Treasures of Pioneer History.

per person per day. Towards the end of this particular company's journey, however, as provisions ran low, they were cut to almost nothing.

The journey was packed with incidents for Sarah's family, one of the earliest being the disappearance of her brother, Joe, who was then sixteen. Only later did the family learn exactly what had happened to him. Apparently, disillusioned by the journey, he had stopped at a farm that the company had passed, had enquired about work and, being offered it, decided to stay.

Another incident related to the first Indians that the young Sarah had seen. Naturally apprehensive of the Indians as they approached the company, she was told there was nothing to fear: in reality the Indians had come to assist the travellers, and, placing the children on the hand-carts, pushed them until that evening's camp was reached. Later the Indians returned with fresh buffalo which they traded for clothing and salt. Buffalo, in fact, appear to have been conveniently numerous for the company; "on two occasions the train of carts had to be split to let them through." Their second "involvement" with Indians was not, however, to be so pleasant.

One day we came upon a camp where there had been a massacre and found the bodies of a woman and child that apparently had escaped only to die of hunger and thirst. There were many people who died; but our greatest hardship began when we reached the deep snows of Wyoming. On one morning fifteen of our camp were found dead. It was so cold the men took turns digging the graves. There were thirteen buried in one and two in another.

The tragedy of a hand-cart party, leaving Iowa City too late in the season, ignoring advice not to undertake the journey at that time was to unfold for Sarah's family and her fellow Saints. Her father's health was seriously affected as he suffered from frostbite; her mother stayed up all night to nurse her ill husband, to find when she came to call her children, that her eleven year old daughter had frozen to death. "She had walked the entire distance and without proper food was unable to stand the severe cold." It was only after help arrived from Salt Lake City that the survivors of the company reached the valley on 9th November 1856.

The history of the hand-cart companies that set out so late in 1856 was movingly described by Mary Pay, who as a child of thirteen crossed the plains with the Martin company. She witnessed her two younger sisters frozen to death and on the very day that the remnants of the company were assisted into Salt Lake City her mother died.

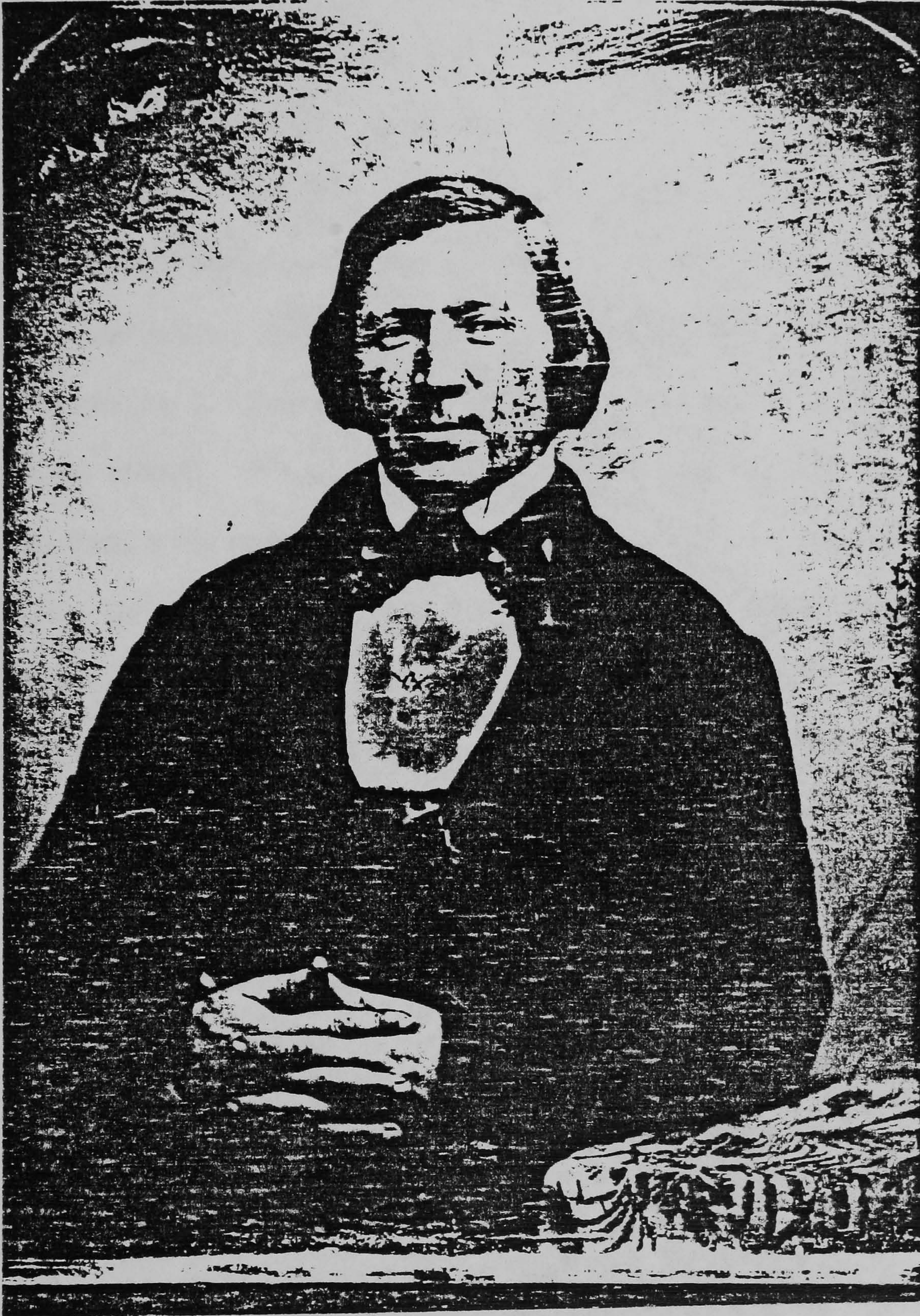
Three out of four that were living were frozen. My mother was dead in the wagon.

Bishop Hardy had taken us to a house in his ward and the brethren and sisters brought us plenty of food. We had to be careful and not eat too much as it might kill us, we were so hungry.

Early next morning Bro. Brigham Young and a doctor came. When Bro. Young came in he shook hands with us all. When he saw our condition - our feet frozen and our mother dead - tears rolled down his cheeks.

The doctor amputated my toes using a saw and a butcher knife. Brigham Young promised me I would not have to have any more of my feet cut off. The sisters were dressing mother for the last time. That afternoon she was buried. ⁴⁴.

44. Quoted by Eugene England, Op. cit. : p.175.



Brigham Young.

Charles W. Carter Collection, Church Archives,
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints.

Susan Melverton Witbeck of Amorn Lane, near Winsum, Somerset, also made the journey westwards as a member of a hand-cart company. She had joined the Church without the knowledge or permission of her grandparents with whom she lived. However, inevitably they heard of her conversion and gave her the choice of giving up her religion or her home. She sadly relinquished the latter: "I loved and adored my grandparents but I could not deny my religion. I knew it was true. My Heavenly Father had given me that testimony. So, difficult as it was, sorrowfully I left my home." She emigrated in March 1857 and, after arriving in New York, journeyed to Iowa City, where her faith was to be tried. A young man proposed marriage, telling her that she was too frail to endure the journey west and, if she did survive it, she would be placed in a harem, a slave to the Mormon men. She declined the proposal, informing the young man that he did not understand her fellow Mormons. "These people, terribly misrepresented and misunderstood, were true saints of God."

While I had been working in Iowa City, preparations had gone ahead for the journey. The handcarts were ready and loaded with our supplies. They were rude two wheeled carts, with a sort of box on an axel between the wheels. There could not have been a more difficult mode of travel. We would push and pull these carts across more than a thousand miles of trackless plains, barren desert and towering mountains.

I knew when I left England that ours was to be a handcart company, but it was impossible for me to realize the hardships I had to meet. Misgivings or fear never entered my mind, for it was the only way I could get to Zion, and the journey had to be met with faith and courage. ⁴⁵.

45. Susan Melverton Witbeck, Autobiography.

In the company there were one hundred and fifty persons, sixty nine males and eighty one females. Initially they were much troubled with rain, their bedding becoming wet, and they found it necessary to cut their possessions to an absolute minimum. Susan's greatest problem, however, awaited her at her journey's end.

For days before we reached Salt Lake, relatives of some of our group had come out to meet them and take them home to the homes of loved ones waiting for them. Our company was constantly getting smaller. As each happy load pulled on away from us, it began to slowly dawn upon my mind that there would be no one to meet me, and no home to go to, when I reached my destination. The feeling of loneliness kept increasing, until the last night we camped, before reaching Salt Lake. I could control my feelings no longer. I wandered far away from camp, threw myself upon the ground, and gave way to my stored up heartache. It happened that the mules later strayed away, and Captain Evans, going in search of them, heard sobbing. Following the sound, he found me. Taking me into his arms, he wanted to know the cause of my grief, for I had been cheerful and happy as we travelled along. I opened my heart to him with all its loneliness and fears. He comforted me, and told me I would be welcomed by all the saints, and that many homes would be opened to me, and maybe some proposals of marriage would be made too. He earnestly asked for and received my pledge that I would marry no one until I had been in the valley two years.

All he told me was true, for we are never without friends when we are among the saints of God.

Susan did marry two years later, she then being twenty years of age; her husband was a widower with three small sons. There were eleven children to the marriage. The couple moved to Juab where they opened a stagecoach station. Later, with the coming of the railway, they maintained a station and hotel and apparently prospered in that capacity.

The sense of loneliness from which Susan Witbeck suffered as she approached the Salt Lake Valley was experienced by a Hanley Saint, George Morris, who had emigrated in 1842, settling at first in Nauvoo and six years later in Salt Lake City. In his autobiography he gave details of the first polygamous marriage into which he entered, this occurring under rather unusual circumstances. In one of the hand-cart companies of 1856 which ran into so much difficulty, travelled a young single woman from Macclesfield who had suffered extensively from frost-bite and exposure and who, apparently, had no one waiting to receive her in the valley. Morris and his wife took her in on the evening of her arrival; her condition was such that she was obviously dying. She did, however, have one wish; she wanted to be sealed to a husband for all time prior to her dying, so that she might experience this sense of belonging. She and George Morris, therefore, were sealed to each other on that night, during which, a few hours later, she died. 46.

A not altogether dissimilar story was narrated by Lucy Clark, who alluded to the severe conditions that beset those companies in 1856. Transportation and teams were sent out from Salt Lake City to assist the companies and bring back the survivors, among whom was a young sister named Mellor, who went to live with the Clark family. "It seemed as if she was sent to us, as I believed in the plurality of wives, and I thought my husband worthy to enter this order of the

46. George Morris, Autobiography .

priesthood, and I invited her to come into our family as a wife to my husband and she consented." 47.

To replace the hand-carts, the Church devised a system whereby settlements in Utah donated teams, wagons and drivers that left each spring, originally journeying to the Missouri where the personal effects of the immigrants, plus provisions and machinery for Utah, were entrusted to the wagons while the immigrants walked beside them. As the railway moved west, however, these wagon teams travelled shorter distances, meeting the immigrants at the railhead. Eventually, of course, the transcontinental railway reached Ogden and the link to Salt Lake City was constructed, providing the convert with a steam conveyance all the way from Liverpool to the Salt Lake Valley. In its notices to emigrants, the Millennial Star itemized the new cost of migration. The sea-fare was six pounds and six shillings for an adult and half that cost for a child under twelve; the cost of the railway journey from New York to Salt Lake City was seven pounds and ten shillings. 48. Thus the total journey could be accomplished by steam ship and railway for a little under fifteen pounds, including provisions and this figure permitted the adult immigrant to transport one hundred pounds in weight of luggage.

Steam revolutionized Mormon emigration; within a decade the Church had moved from sailing vessels and hand-cart companies to steam

47. Lucy Ashby Clarke, "Autobiography" in our Pioneer History .

48. Millennial Star : Vol.- 31, 19th July 1869.

ships and railways; within three weeks the entire emigration from Liverpool to Salt Lake City could be achieved.

It is true the highway is not yet cast up in the great deep, for the ransomed of the Lord to pass over, but a highway has been cast up in the desert, all the way to Zion, so that the journey can be made overland with great speed and pleasure.

In crossing the ocean, too, marked improvements have been effected. Instead of going in sailing ships, which we hope never will be again, the Saints now go in commodious steamers. Sailing vessels are very interesting things to look at but not quite such interesting things to be in. The journey hence to New York now occupies eleven or twelve days by emigrant steamers; whereas by sailing ships it would occupy from a third to a half and occasionally the whole of that number of weeks. This is a great difference, and, what is better, is a difference very favourable to the Saints, which is a great blessing to them, but which perhaps only those who have experienced both methods of voyaging can fully appreciate. Not only is the voyage so much shorter than formerly, but it is in many other ways far more agreeable. The accommodations on board the steamships are more roomy and airy and cleaner. Much better attention is paid to the emigrants. The conduct of officers and crew is more decent, respectful and courteous, than is apt to be the case on a sailing vessel. The provisions furnished are much better and more abundant. These are served ready cooked upon the table.

As to the land journey, that occupies about a week from New York to the Salt Lake Valley, and when the Utah Central Railway is finished to Salt Lake City, which, however, is now only a day's journey from the railway. A week now to travel all that distance, nearly as long as the sea voyage, and which formerly occupied three or more months. No tedious travelling by ox-team, no laborious dragging of handcarts now. The emigrant Saints jump on a railway train, pass swiftly through the heart of the United States, their attention is agreeably occupied by the new, attractive, and diversified scenery, and before they are aware they are set down on the banks of old Weber and near the shores of the Great Salt Lake of the Great Basin of North America. The whole journey from Liverpool, a fourth of the circumference of the earth, is accomplished in three weeks, so rapidly that the emigrating Saints are apt to wonder whether or not it is all a dream, rather than the sober reality. ^{49.}

49. Millennial Star : Vol. 31, 18th September 1869.

The Mormons had been fortunate in having the transcontinental railway cross northern Utah; indeed the official meeting point of the eastward and westward railway construction was at Ogden where the golden spike was ceremonially driven into the line. With foresight Brigham Young had welcomed the intrusion of this metal highway and had organized the construction of the branch line to Salt Lake City with a rapidity that typified Mormon action. By 1870 this project was completed. It marked, of course, an end to a type of emigration, to wagons and hand-carts, to a fourteen hundred mile journey which most undertook on foot, a journey that was a severe test of faith as well as fortitude. The railway also signified a new era; Utah and the Salt Lake Valley were no longer isolated and the Mormons had to reconcile themselves to increased contact with the "gentile" world.

For those Midland Saints with relatives already established in Utah, the initial winter spent there was often at the abode of the relative. Joseph Argyle,⁵⁰ who had crossed the continent in 1856 with his wife and six children, pulling two hand-carts for fourteen hundred miles, stayed with his wife's father upon reaching the valley, later making his own home in Bountiful. Thomas Crowther, formerly of the Tipton Branch, whose wife had died during the journey west, lived with his parents-in-law when he first arrived in Salt Lake City; subsequently he remarried and moved to Cedar City.⁵¹ In some cases,

50. Joseph Argyle, Reminiscences and Journal .

51. Thomas Crowther, Autobiography .

however, that early period in Utah must have been an additional trial of faith, for they had to improvise, the wagons which they had relied upon to convey them across the plains and mountains now having to provide a home in Zion, as in the case of Frederick Weight. 52.

Francis George Wall emigrated in 1863, travelling with his parents and two sisters on the Amazon, the other children in the family having been sent ahead with earlier emigration companies. They suffered from acute sea-sickness and had the misfortune to lose all their possessions when journeying across the continent by train, for the car conveying their belongings caught fire, its contents being destroyed. Arriving in Salt Lake City in October, they prepared for the winter.

Our first home was a dugout with logs for the roof; this was covered with willows then a layer of grass, then covered with dirt, making it as comfortable as possible for the winter. 53.

Mary Garner entered the Salt Lake Valley in the early eighties, staying for a short time at Salt Lake City before moving with her mother, step father and the rest of the family to Slaterville where they cultivated their land, built a log cabin and engaged in farming. As the land had not previously been ploughed and was largely covered with sagebrush, the process was arduous. "It was a struggle with the soil for a few years to make it produce enough crops to live

52. Frederick Weight, Life History of Frederick Weight.

53. Francis George Wall, "Autobiography" in Our Pioneer Heritage : ed. Kate B. Carter, Vol. 7, 1964, pp. 362-368.

on, but we were very happy and content to have a home of our own. This was the first home we ever had owned and we could look forward to peace and prosperity." 54. In some years the harvest failed - 1854 and 1855 were examples of this when drought and grasshoppers combined to frustrate and impoverish the farmers - but by the judicious division of grain and vegetables among the Saints of Slaterville the family and their neighbours survived. "Some of the cattle died through exposure to cold weather and lack of sufficient food, yet we were happy." In 1856 Mary Garner married and subsequently moved to Hooper, Utah, where she and her husband farmed.

In pioneering the west we endured many hardships. We were all poor and each farmer tried to raise the crops his family would need most to provide the necessities of life. The crops mainly consisted of hay, grain, potatoes, corn and garden vegetables. We would all plant some rye and cut or cradle it before it was ripe to make our children's hats. If we were making dress hats the straw was split so as to make a finer braid. This would make a nicer hat. Each farmer had a few sheep; he would shear the wool and we ladies would wash it, then do our own carding and spinning. Then we would dye the wool and after it was dry take it to the weavers to make it into cloth. From this we made dresses and overalls. We did all the sewing by hand because there were no sewing machines on the market, and if there had been we did not have enough money to buy one. We knit all the stockings, socks, and mittens for the family and did the family washing by hand. We had no coal, so we gathered sagebrush to burn both summer and winter. We had no farm machinery, so the grain was cut with a cradle, threshed by pounding it out by hand.

The schools were very poor, but we gave our children the best education we could under existing conditions. We had to make our own entertainment. We had house parties and would play games, dance and have a lunch. The old and young all joined in the fun together. We had some celebrations

54. Mary Field Garner, "Autobiography" in Our Pioneer History.

and had foot races, jumping and horse races, and other good, clean sports. We were united and enjoyed associating together.

Mary Garner exemplified the type of existence that could be and was achieved by many Midland Saints who established themselves in Zion. As is evidenced in their diaries, this was not achieved without considerable toil, suffering and the testing of their faith, yet they survived all, to establish themselves in this area of mountain, desert and river valleys. The life-style suggested by the above account of life in Utah may have been short on luxuries and sophistication but the true comparison should be with conditions the Saints might have experienced in England had they remained; by emigrating they had advanced themselves both spiritually and, in most cases, materially. Mary Garner certainly felt she had. She resided in Utah for the rest of her life, being one hundred and seven when she died; she was reputed to be the last living witness to have actually seen and known the Prophet Joseph Smith and had witnessed the bodies of the murdered Prophet and his brother as they lay in Nauvoo, prior to burial, ninety nine years earlier!

The experiences of the Midlands Saints who journeyed to Zion were as varied as they were themselves. Many knew poverty both en route and when they had reached their destination. John Powell, previously of Smethwick, wrote "I will not in detail relate my bitter experiences in Salt Lake, I prefer to forget them. Work was scarce, times were hard and I soon became penniless and I might say, friendless. It was late November, and I spent several nights on the hard ground

where Bonneville Park now is. "55. Injustice and exploitation were not unknown in Utah : Henry Butler told of being loaned out to Utah farmers from the age of ten as "it was the custom in those days for the poor people to loan a child out to another family for his room and board in exchange for any work they wished the child to do. Some of these homes were kind and thoughtful, others merely wished to use the child as a slave - thus giving it only the necessary food and clothing for survival. Some of these foster parents were brutal to a child."56. Such practices, however, were not peculiar to Utah; other Saints refer to similar systems operating in rural England. Certain Midland Saints made major contributions to the life of Utah, without perhaps realizing the full significance of their labour. Thomas Day of Birmingham helped build the wall around the Temple in Salt Lake City, laying three of the four corner stones. 57. Edwin Smout, who was originally received into the Church at Tipton, built the first schoolhouse at Slaterville, Utah, and was elected Justice of the Peace in that town. 58. It was through such contributions that civic life could be conducted and such men merit a part in the story of the development of Utah. They brought a diversity of experience, expertise, enterprise and energy.

55. John Powell, A Summary of the Religious Side of my Life :

56. Henry Butler, "Autobiography" in Our Pioneer Heritage; ed. Kate B. Carter: Vol. 12, 1969, pp. 76-78.

57. Thomas Day, Autobiography.

58. Edwin Smout, Journal: B.Y.U., M.270.

The journey to Kirtland, to Nauvoo or, eventually, to Utah was a test of the steadfastness of those who undertook it. Some failed and apostatized but for the many who succeeded, their journey and ultimate settlement became a testimony to their faith.

While it would be fallacious to write of the average Mormon emigrant of the period, since variety rather than similarity was their mark, one Midland family who have remained unrenowned, did experience much that has identified the Mormon response to the call to gather. Edward Payne had been born in Warminster but by 1854, then aged twenty two, he was working in the Staffordshire coalmines. Here he attended a Latter-Day Saints' meeting and was converted, as was his brother Charles, but the latter drifted away from the Mormon faith following his marriage. After his baptism Edward lived with George Powell and his family, Powell having joined the Church in 1850. Powell's daughter, also a Church member, and Payne were married in 1854 and thereafter resided in Staffordshire for nine years, during which time they had four children.

In the summer of 1863 work in the coalfields became spasmodic yet the miners were bound by contract to their employers and so could not seek employment elsewhere. Hardly able to survive on a wage that reflected the half time working enforced upon the miners, Edward and three other members of the Church determined to break their contracts. They held sales of their household goods and with the money raised were able to purchase passages to New York. In that city they were met by agents from the Pennsylvanian coalfields who offered them work in

Fallbrook in that State.

Edward's wife and children, however, had to remain in Staffordshire, there being insufficient funds to finance their emigration. Emma Payne and her children returned to her father's house but the mine owner, angry at Payne and his colleagues breaking their contracts, threatened that either she must leave or all would be evicted. She pleaded and got her parents to stay but had to find other accommodation herself. One son she left with her parents, two other of her children were taken in by different Mormon families, while the baby, Thomas, remained with his mother. Thus she fended for herself and worked until she could be reunited with her husband. This occurred at the end of the year as Edward had by that time saved sufficient out of his earnings as a miner in Pennsylvania to finance the Atlantic crossing for Emma and one of her children; the rest of the family joined their father and mother six months later, Edward and Emma saving and borrowing to accomplish this. With the children travelled the Powell family and another son-in-law, James Price. Now the pattern of saving recommenced, to pay off the money borrowed to date and to save sufficient to finance the journey to Utah, it involving the entire family, even the eight year old George working in the mine, loading coal wagons.

The Perpetual Emigrating Fund financed the journey from New York to Utah, but the party had to leave one of its number behind in the east to continue in the mines and thus make a contribution to the expense of the migration west. As the youngest adult, Edward accepted this responsibility, the rest of the family travelling via St. Louis

to Florence where they joined a wagon train and eventually arrived at the Salt Lake Valley. The journey, of course, was not without incident. The Payne's baby, Thomas, died en route and James Price also buried a baby son; additionally a son was born to Price and his wife.

The party was directed to Heber City and there camped in a log school house for a day or two, then moved to a stable while a one room building, fourteen feet square and constructed of logs, was being prepared. Into this all three families moved. Later a dug-out or half cellar was added to the abode, and here Emma gave birth to a daughter. In his biography of the family, H.M. Payne, a son of Edward and Emma, commemorated his mother's achievement.

Think of the faith of a woman who could leave her husband behind and walk two thousand miles in a delicate condition and give birth to a child ten days after reaching the valley, and in one little room with three families, and no light, with quilts laid on the floor, no doctor and no one but grandmother for a nurse; all for the sake of the gospel. 59.

George Powell and James Price became furnace workers and, as soon as she was able, Emma found employment. Edward during this time, worked in the Pennsylvanian mines and paid off the family debt to the Perpetual Emigrating Fund. With this achieved, he gained a position as driver of an ox-team - although he had never driven a team before - and in this manner eventually travelled to Utah, being reunited with

59. H.M. Payne, The Payne Family : B.Y.U. Ms. 175.

his family in September 1865. The family emigration had taken two and a half years but it had been achieved, if at a cost.

In Utah the family contributed to the pioneering life. Edward was employed in the construction of the railways, working for both the Union Pacific and a narrow gauge railway that was built by the Church from Echo to Coalville. His sons likewise found work in this construction programme. Later they moved to Glenwood where Edward returned to working in the mines.

In 1874 in Glenwood, the family gave all they possessed to the Church when the United Order was instituted, an experiment in communitarian living that enjoyed greater success in Glenwood than in most communities. The members dedicated all their belongings to the Church and only took out of the common holding what they required for their personal existence. Four years after the inauguration the system was disbanded, the participants receiving equal shares. Glenwood became the permanent family home: four more children were born to Edward and Emma; George Powell and Henry Payne, Edward's son, both undertook missions to England; Edward served the community as an unqualified doctor. Seven thousand miles removed from their origins, the family contributed to Church and community.

The emigration and eventual settlement of Midland Saints is the collective chronicle of families such as the Paynes. The extended nature of their migration and the enforced separation they had to accept were experiences common to many who responded to the call to

gather. Theirs were the stories that comprised the legend of the Mormon trek westwards yet the great majority of Saints remained unknown beyond their immediate circle of friends and descendants; theirs was a remarkable achievement whilst the major actors remained anonymous.

That the outside world accepted the permanence of Zion in the desert and was fascinated by the achievements of the Saints was signified by those interested parties who travelled to Utah to witness these accomplishments. One such group who approved of what they saw were the party of British travellers - possibly the first genuine group of tourists to visit Utah - led by Thomas Cook, who visited the developing city in 1872. The party "were astonished at the magnitude and business characteristics of Salt Lake City," they met Brigham Young, visited the Tabernacle and witnessed the initial construction work on the Temple. Cook visited one of his former neighbours from Leicester, who had left that town nineteen years earlier and farmed in his adopted country; the Victorian traveller commented that he found the produce of the farm "perfectly astounding" while he felt that his former neighbour "really appeared to be in circumstances of strong attachment to the place; and thus it was with a great number of industrious settlers, and it is earnestly hoped that they will never be disturbed in the possession of such honorably acquired wealth, for wealth it really is of the very best kind." Cook concluded that "it was unquestionable that Brigham Young and his adherents have raised a city, cultivated the greater part of the Territory of Utah, constructed railways, and executed other public works, and have pioneered the way to the formation of another State of the Union." 60.

A MORMON PEOPLE.

In listening to these modern prophets, I discovered as I think, the great secret of their success in making converts. They speak to a common feeling: they minister to a universal want. They contrast strongly the miraculous power of the gospel in the apostolic time with the present state of our nominal Christianity. ¹.

In November 1840, the Gloucester Chronicle, in an article entitled "The Mormonites", informed its readership that "like the Swedenborgians, the Southcottians and other enthusiasts, they (the Mormons) will dwindle into insignificance after having made a little noise." ². In their expectations, this journal and the many others which expressed similar hopes were to be disappointed; their anticipations proved unfounded, their commentaries ill-informed. Although the Church, even in its most successful years in the early 1850s, touched considerably less than one percent of the British population, it was not to share the fate of various contemporary sects which struggled to sustain themselves beyond the founding generation and lapsed towards oblivion. The comfortable conclusion of the Gloucester Chronicle that "the imposture will soon be exploded" was little more than a pious hope.

Reasons for the survival of the Mormon Church in the economic, religious and social turmoil of nineteenth century America and Britain

1. Millennial Star : Vol. 10, 1st October 1848.
2. Gloucester Chronicle : 21st November 1840.

are as varied as the Saints themselves, yet in the uniqueness and peculiarities of the Church may be seen a pointer to its withstanding the forces that might otherwise have accelerated decline and demise. The Mormon Church claimed to be a divine restoration of the Apostolic Church; it offered its converts security and resolved the confusion of denominational contention; it revived Old Testament practices and institutions and taught the doctrine of the gathering; the Kingdom of God was to be built on earth, in America. In these beliefs and teachings, the Church was demonstrating its commitment to renewal and exclusiveness, characteristics of sects, yet the Latter-Day Saints in other, equally important matters transcended the boundaries of sectarianism.

Sociology has provided definitions and qualifications for different types of religious bodies. Inevitably there is some internal argument about the accuracy of classifications and distinctions, but sufficient agreement emerges for various forms of religious organizations to be delineated and for that general understanding to be applied to the Mormon Church with the intention that some appreciation of the factors peculiar to and responsible for its success might be clarified.

A sect implies a body of believers, freely contracted and elected to the religious organization, with conversion a prerequisite to election; it is exclusive and employs expulsion against those who contravene its tenets. It is indifferent or even hostile to secular society and pursues separateness, electing for isolation rather than compromise. Often it is persecuted which may lead to a greater unity and cohesion among its members. It is an egalitarian body, with a high

level of lay participation; members are encouraged spontaneously to demonstrate commitment. This commitment in the sectarian is always more marked than in members of other non-sectarian religious bodies. 3.

A church, on the other hand, accepts its members usually on the basis of birth; members are born into such a body rather than freely opting for membership. Unlike the sect, there is a pronounced and well developed hierarchy and a clearly established dogma. There is an orientation towards the conversion of all. Above all, there is a tendency to compromise with and adjust to the world. This distinction between sectarian and churchman has been unequivocally recorded: "Sectarrians put their faith first; they order their lives in accordance with it. The orthodox, in contrast, compromise faith with other interests, and their religion accommodates the demands of the secular culture." 4.

Strictly defined, a sect has difficulty in outlasting its founding generation, for the birth of offspring to the sectarians and the worldly success, which often accrues from their frugality and industry, force the sect to adjust to the secular society within whose wider remit it functions; it will usually compromise its distinctive and founding principles and may well develop into the third type of organization, the denomination. "Denominations are simply sects in an advanced stage of development and of adjustment to each other and to the secular world." 5.

3. See Bryan R. Wilson, Patterns of Sectarianism: London, 1967, Chapter 1, "An Analysis of Sect Development." Also H.R. Niebuhr, The Social Sources of Denominationalism: New York, 1929.

4. Bryan R. Wilson, Religious Sects : p. 7.

5. H.R. Niebuhr, *Op. cit.* : p. 17.

A denomination will accept adherents without the imposition of some claim to personal merit or affirmation of a conversion experience; a corollary is that expulsion is rarely employed. A denomination is content to be one movement among others, all of which are believed to be acceptable in the sight of God. It possesses a trained, professional ministry and restricts lay participation to specific activities. Its services are formalized and spontaneity is forsaken. The values of the secular society and the state are accepted; "it accepts the standards and values of the prevailing culture and conventional morality." 6.

Sociological analysis provides a spectrum of types of religious organization, from the radical, the sect, to the conservative, the church. Additionally, there is the suggestion of movement within this spectrum, certainly from sect to denomination. Each group may be further sub-divided into more narrowly defined types with precise practices and structures. There have also been arguments for the inclusion of other categories of religious organization, specifically the cult 7. and the independent group, 8. within the spectrum. The debate is detailed and demands patience, caution and respect of its reader. The preceding classifications and their more obvious distinctions are an oversimplification of the scholarship undertaken into this area; hopefully, however, their application to the Mormon Church during the formative years of its British Mission will afford an understanding of that body

6. Bryan R. Wilson, Patterns of Sectarianism : p.25.

7. H. Becker, Systematic Sociology : New York, 1932.

8. J. Wach, The Sociology of Religion : Chicago, 1944.
(Wach refers to the Mormon Church as an independent group with a semi-ecclesiastical organization).

and provide some rationale, however tentative, for its success and survival.

Both the Mormon Church in America and its British Mission exhibited typical sectarian traits. There was the sense of peculiarity, of election and covenant, the tendency to withdrawal from the "gentile" world, the commitment to gathering the elect and warning the secular society of its impending destruction, the millennial expectations of the Church. Its rejection of alcohol and tobacco reinforced its exclusivity, whilst the persecution it endured in both countries, although in certain rural locations deterring the less committed of members, enhanced the solidarity of the Saints. It possessed charismatic leadership, its Prophet receiving divine revelation. Lay participation was encouraged and, whilst the priesthood was achieved by the sustaining of the member in that office by the members of the appropriate branch of the Church, the office was open to all male Saints.

During the early years of its missionary activity, the Mormon Church reached that point in its evolution when signs of it developing from sect to denomination were apparent. Its charismatic leadership was becoming institutionalized; a hierarchy was evolving with a distinctive structure; its organization was tending to be centralized; its attempts to build the kingdom in Kirtland, Far West and Nauvoo had all demanded a type of accommodation with secular society. Its enforced evacuation of each of these locations, however, created other factors which mitigated the drift towards denominationalism. The Mormon Church was reliving the wilderness wanderings of the Children of Israel:

circumstances over which it lacked control were emphasizing this parallel and forcing it deeper into the Mormon consciousness.

The expulsion from Nauvoo and the consequent "flight" to the desert provided the Mormon Church with a stage upon which it could re-enact biblical history.⁹ This was the culmination of sixteen years of journeying, of establishing settlements where cities were planned and temple foundations commenced. The nineteenth century Hebrews shared in common success and failure; they emulated their biblical forbears in sharing a common suffering in the face of human and environmental adversaries. The size, extent and duration of their suffering transformed sectarian affiliation into national potentiality. This was accentuated by their journey to and settlement of the Salt Lake Valley. The comparative isolation of Utah provided the location which was free from "gentile" interference and was sufficiently austere in its topography to pose an appropriate challenge to those who had wandered the wilderness; additionally it offered the Church the necessary time for Mormonism to develop. Here certain sectarian attributes were further jettisoned: the central control and planning of the settlement heightened the authority of the Church's officers and enhanced the hierarchy within the priesthood. This, however, combined with an open and accessible, if isolated, land, with the missionary success of the Church and with the influx of immigrants. In short, the Church became the centre of a

9. Thomas O' Dea, "Mormonism and the Avoidance of Sectarian Stagnation : A Study of Church, Sect and Incipient Nationality," in American Journal of Sociology, No. 60, November 1954, pp. 285 - 293.

large culture area in which it could develop a sense of nationality.

The members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints had become - to use the significant term often used most casually by the Mormons themselves - the "Mormon people". Moreover, the Mormon people had found a homeland. The ties of religious faith were reinforced by those of blood and marriage, of common group memories often involving suffering and heroism, of common economic and cultural aspirations - and now by a region whose very physiognomy would become symbolic of another and perhaps greater group achievement, the successful settlement in the desert. ¹⁰.

With their settlement of Utah, the Saints had become a people; they had opportunity and time to develop and practise their own subculture in their own homeland, removed from interference. Simultaneously they were creating their own myth and folk-lore, to which the heroic trek of the thousands of immigrant Saints contributed. The narrative of every family who crossed the plains, rivers, mountains and deserts, whether with wagon-trains or pushing hand-carts, added to the saga of heroism, extended the culture and myth and made the Mormon people special and peculiar. The Saints had created a unique mythology in which all converts could participate and to which all had to aspire.

All Saints in Britain and America shared this experience which intensified the feeling of separateness and elitism. The Mormon Church had evolved into a distinctive body; it combined sectarian characteristics

10. Ibid: 293. (In his footnote 14.0' Dea cites the work of Park and Burgess, Introduction to the Science of Sociology, Chicago, 1921, in which the Mormon Church in its development is likened to the form of a state and becomes a nationality).

with structures and policies more usually associated with denominations. It had avoided the fate of an isolated sect - ironically, had persecution not necessitated the westward migration, it could have remained merely another Protestant group declining on the American frontier - yet it had become neither denomination nor church, although it displayed characteristics of both. The Church was not compliant to the categories of the typology but was achieving the personality of an incipient nationality.

British Saints were not unmindful of this subtle evolution with which they were expected to identify. Irrespective of their location, Saints were of one Church and shared a common character and anticipated a common destiny. The Saints in Britain were informed of happenings in America through the pages of the Millennial Star, which assumed that all readers experienced a common interest, to accommodate which the journal was Anglo-American in style, content and ethos, concerned with events on the American continent, which it reported in detail, as well as those pertaining to Europe.

It assumed that society was basically similar in the two countries, and that on a practical level there were no problems beyond those of pioneer living and frontiersmanship. The enemies and difficulties were the same in both countries. Environment was virtually ignored; so also was time. Life in Old Testament days was treated as similar to modern times, with prophets, miracles and God's commandments as plain now as then. For the true millenarian past and present were fused together, and place had little significance. 11.

11. J.F.C. Harrison, The Second Coming : Popular Millenarianism 1780 - 1850 : p.191.

Through the medium of the Millennial Star, the influence of the American missionaries and later that of the British Saints who, having emigrated, had subsequently been set aside to undertake a mission to the country of their origin, the Saints in Britain were afforded a common identity with their brethren in America. The borders of nationality and allegiance to country were breached as British Saints shared in spirit if not in person, the traumas of the exodus from Nauvoo or the westward trek; they were one with those who underwent the actual experiences and they were dedicated to emulate them; they were also of the modern tribe of Israel seeking an ideal through their wanderings. The doctrine of the gathering was a divine revelation which the Saint should do all possible to fulfil. Events some seven thousand miles removed, then, were pertinent to the lives of all Mormons and united Saints on both sides of the Atlantic as one people with common aims and beliefs.

In retrospect, and irrespective of its causes, Joseph Smith's determination that the Church he had founded should initiate an overseas mission may be interpreted as the most important single act in sustaining the Mormon Church. It may have alleviated an immediate crisis in Kirtland, but, more importantly, it revived the Church and ensured that it should neither drift nor stagnate. Within three years of the first apostolic mission, British Saints were responding to the doctrine of the gathering and were providing an infusion of skills and expertise in Nauvoo and other American settlements, which helped sustain and develop the communities. The Church's immigration programme

distinguished the Mormon Church from its contemporaries and provided an additional dimension to its character. The convert elected to assume the mantle of uniqueness, to become a part of a self-perpetuating myth, to inherit a role which had to be lived up to; he was related, without concept of time, to the nomadic Children of Israel, to the patriarchs of the Bible, and, without perspective of distance, to his fellow Saints in America, with whom he was one and whom he hoped to join. Nationality was of little consequence; the Saint was of the Mormon people and owed his allegiance to his Church, through the egalitarian ethos of which he experienced a peculiar relationship with Prophet, apostle and missionary.

The Church's missionaries, both those who had known American frontier life and those who had been recruited into the Church in Britain, affected an easy identification with the British converts. Henry Stokes attested to the contrast between the plainness of the Mormon preachers to whom he gave his attention and the sophistication of the clergy of the Established Church with whom he was familiar. ¹². Equally significant was the initial acceptability of Mormon missionaries to the ministers of various denominations. In many instances the pulpits of Independent Churches and of chapels belonging to the denominations were offered to the itinerants. The missionaries of 1837 had the temporary use of certain chapels and were apparently welcomed until an appreciation of the threat to his congregation was perceived by the

12. Henry Stokes, Reminiscences.

minister. The first instance of such an invitation was that extended by the Revd. James Fielding who offered the Vauxhall Chapel at Preston to his brother, Joseph. This can be explained in terms of the relationship of the two men but other reason must be advanced to explain the openness of the initial invitations proffered by other clergymen. In June 1840, Theodore Turley was invited to preach in the Baptist Chapel at Wednesbury on successive nights, but, returning on the third day, he was threatened with violence.¹³ In January of the following year, Lorenzo Snow, who had met with indifference in Wolverhampton, was afforded the use of the Baptist Chapel, through the influence of a Mr. Farmer, whom Snow subsequently baptized.¹⁴ In these and other similar instances, there is the suggestion that the Mormon missionaries were given a cordial reception of the type that was extended to other American evangelists whose presence had been accepted within the region. The peculiar teachings of Mormonism were neither apparent nor anticipated, the congregation seemingly making no distinction between the Saints and their contemporaries.

The possibility that Mormon preachers were complaisant in presenting an image of mainstream evangelicalism should not be rejected for they were granted many openings in non-conformist places of worship, upon which they then attempted to capitalize. In appearing to comply with the expected orthodoxy they had an eminent precedent, for the

13. Theodore Turley, Reminiscences and Journal : entries for 14th - 16th June 1840.

14. Manuscript History of the British Mission : entry under "Diary of the British Mission". Report from Lorenzo Snow, 19th January 1841.

missionaries of the early Christian Church in the first century A.D. had appeared conformist when initially carrying their message to a new location. St. Paul in company with Barnabas and other early Christians, upon arriving at Antioch in Pisidia, ¹⁵. had taken his seat in the synagogue there without announcement and had then been invited by the leaders of the synagogue to address the congregation. On the following sabbath they had attracted huge crowds eager to hear the personal testimony but the Jews, at whose invitation they had addressed the congregation, became aware of the threat to the gathering, were abusive to the missionaries and commenced a persecution against them. The sequence of these events was to be repeated at their next venue, Iconium, and subsequently at other locations.

The parallels between the missionaries of the New Testament and the Saints of the nineteenth century are illuminating. The former were Jews who accepted that Christ was the Messiah for whom they had been waiting and for whom they had been prepared by Old Testament prophecies. In purveying their belief they made initial use of the synagogue - not always a building but a recognizable gathering point - until they were denounced by those who had at first extended a welcome, branded as heretics and presented as a threat to Judaism. St. Paul, for example, was attacked at several places, including Lystra and Thessalonica. Eighteen centuries later, a re-enactment occurred. Mormon missionaries had often shared sectarian or denominational beliefs

15. The Bible : The Act of the Apostles : Chapter 13, verses 13 - 44.

with those to whom they now ministered.' They retained much of their former religious practice and during the formative years of the British Mission attended church or chapel and gratefully accepted any opportunity to address a congregation from a pulpit or in certain cases, for example in their addressing members of the United Brethren, they were pleased to preach in private accommodation, the recognizable gathering point. Like their illustrious predecessors they appeared not to announce their peculiarities in advance of their receiving an invitation to preach or address a gathering; they were opportunist in making whatever use they could of existing practices and institutions. Whether this was a developed strategy or an unwitting expediency is a matter for conjecture; it was, however, successful and presented the Saints with an opportunity of addressing readily assembled gatherings and so promulgating their specific teachings which would shortly be denounced as anathema.

The Mormon Church was conscious of its emulation of biblical occurrences and narratives, itself drawing attention to its own wanderings reproducing those of the Children of Israel. The Saints stood in a timeless relationship with the patriarch of the Bible and even its most contentious doctrine, which gave approval for the practice of polygamy, took its example from the Old Testament. So, then, with its missionary activities: Heber C. Kimball, Joseph Fielding, Wilford Woodruff and those who followed, irrespective of national origin, were the successors to the earliest Christian missionaries, theirs was the tradition of Paul and those who laboured amongst the Jews and Gentiles,

and the practices of the biblical forbears could be repeated in Victorian Britain without reserve.

The foundation of the Mormon Church and its instituting its British Mission is a phenomenon of the nineteenth century but both have a sense of belonging to earlier practices and traditions which transcend period and place. The primitivist seeker in Britain who had awaited the coming of Mormonism and who contributed to its early harvest must have experienced a satisfaction from belonging to a body which claimed to receive direct revelation through a living Prophet, which gave unequivocal directives concerning the improvement of the quality of this life in anticipation of the next and yet whose customs and origins could be traced to the patriarchs of a revered age, whose own lives and standards were recorded in the most holy of works. The teachings of Christ, the message of Moroni, the flight from Israel, the settlement on the banks of the Mississippi or the deserts of Utah interrelate and fuse actuality and legend, yet they guided thousands of converts during the early years of Queen Victoria's reign, many of whom contributed to and were sublimated by a legend and an Odyssey that remains meaningful in the later stages of the following century.

The men and women who accepted Church membership - the eminent preachers and missionaries, the distributors of tracts, the aged and the young, the mothers who journeyed over ocean, deserts and mountains caring for their families, the men who laboured in Britain or America to provide passages for dependants, the seekers of a philosophy that satisfied spiritual and secular needs, the publishers of journals and

hymn books, the infants who suffered the extremes of weather during their emigration - all contributed to the development of a distinctive people. Within the annals of working-class endeavour and advancement there can be few more appropriate examples of a people so varied in their individuality achieving so much in their unity. The British Mission of the Mormon Church contributed an interesting and significant chapter to the evolution of the working classes. To understand the achievement is to appreciate the individuals who contributed to it. In this lies the justification for a regional study ¹⁶. which affords a degree of intimacy which might remain concealed in a more general national analysis and description. The West Midlands of England provides a most fertile region for such a study.

From this area, rich in the working-class traditions, diverse in topography and culture, derive the many heroes and heroines of this narrative, the ordinary Saints and their families, whose story this is and whose problems and achievements, trials and joys, have been recreated. To share something of their experiences is to recognize their remarkable qualities and the magnitude of their endeavour. The Mormon people exemplify the belief that the history of a people is what they do, suffer, enjoy, think and feel, and that in the lives of a people are to be found stories as great as any in legend.

16. During the early stages of this research, Professor Malcolm R. Thorp of Brigham Young University, in correspondence with the writer (4th October 1979) posed the question of the relevance of a regional approach to Mormon history. The concentration of detail which permits a familiarity with ordinary Church members, who remain unsung and largely unknown, has, hopefully, justified this particular perspective.

By the 1870s, the Millennial Star was publishing obituaries of some of the early Saints who had joined the Church in England and who had shared in many of the momentous events of Church history. In the economic language of this record of a life, the brevity of the report giving a poignancy to the remembrance, may be found a major source of Mormon history. The story of the Saints was repeatedly encapsulated in these final tributes. One obituary must represent all and provide a sense of the collective nature and record of the Mormon people.

Mary Philips, born in Worcestershire, England, 4 December 1774, died Kaysville, Utah Territory, 19 January 1871 in her 98th year. Her parents were Methodists, she was christened in the Methodist Chapel. She was a member of Lady Huntington's Church for some fifteen years, then joined the United Brethren, under Father Thomas Kington. Baptized by Woodruff when he visited Herefordshire in 1840. Emigrated to Nauvoo in 1844 in her 70th year. Saw Joseph Smith before he was martyred. Lived in Camp Creek, 15 miles from Nauvoo. Driven into Nauvoo by the mob. She was ill at the time. Driven out of Nauvoo with the rest of the Saints in 1846. Stayed at Winter Quarters where she lost, by fire, what little property she had saved from the mob. To Salt Lake Valley in 1850. Moved to Kaysward in 1851. Midwife for 45 years, until 96. Eleven children, two of whom are in the Valley. 35 grandchildren, and 31 great grandchildren.

In her 80s she was still farming and giving the produce of her land and animals to the Perpetual Emigrating Fund. In her will she left all her property, including 15 head of animals (horned stock) to emigrate her relatives from England to Utah.

The funeral sermon was preached by Wilford Woodruff. 17.

17. Millennial Star : Vol. 33, 28th February 1871.

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